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Sexual harassmment of working women

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WORKING WOMEN

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Sociology

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Christina L. Smith Montgomery

May 1983

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University
of Nebraska at Omaha.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is sexual harassment of working women. Sexual harassment is defined for the purposes of this research as "any repeated and unwanted sexual comments, looks, suggestions or physical contact that one finds objectionable or offensive and causes one discomfort on the job or in the classroom." Sexual harassment has been discussed and debated in the popular media since the mid 1970s. It has also become a legal issue and a number^① of sexual harassment suits have been filed by sexually harassed women.

Sexual harassment merits sociological study because^② it appears to affect a great number of working women and their families. The consequences of sexual harassment can be severe for the harassed women in both social and economic terms. Often quitting a job in which one is sexually harassed is not economically feasible. Often women endure sexual harassment out of fear of losing their jobs or suffering negative consequences such as a demotion or unpleasant work assignments if they reject their harasser. Continued harassment may create feelings of isolation and loneliness for the harassed woman. § (Safran, 1976:21).

The harassed woman may blame herself for being harassed. (3)
Many sexually harassed women have reported that the stress
of having to put up with being repeatedly sexually harassed
has resulted in psychosomatic symptoms such as ulcers,
migrain headaches, insomnia, and depression. (Safran,
 1976:21; Silverman, 1977:19).

Many of the articles appearing in the popular media claim that sexual harassment of working women is increasing (Safran, 1976:19; Rivers, 1978:21). Several books have been published on the subject and a number of surveys have been conducted to determine the extent of the problem. Recently women's support groups and corporate human resource departments have held forums and seminars on sexual harassment in the workplace and classroom. What was (4)
once thought to be a rare occurrence or an isolated personal
problem is now being recognized as a serious social problem
for many working women today.

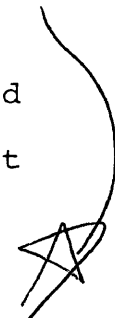
In order to define a personal problem as a social (5)
problem two elements must exist. First, a large number of
people in society must agree that a problem exists or that
a norm has been violated. Second, a large number of people
must agree that the condition needs to be remedied; there
needs to be collective social action undertaken to solve
the problem (Williamson, et al., 1977). A social problem
does not just simply exist; it must be defined. The
definition of any social problem is a process. This research
on sexual harassment is then a part of the process by which

sexual harassment is being defined as a social problem in our society. 3

Review of the Previous Literature

Before 1975 little if anything was written about the sexual harassment of working women. In fact, the term sexual harassment had not been coined. Since that time the majority of the articles on sexual harassment have appeared in publications such as Ms, Redbook, and Mother Jones. These articles from popular rather than scholarly publications have quoted from the experiences of harassed women and were generally anecdotal. Several articles included the results of surveys of sexual harassment. Most of these surveys were biased because of heavy reliance on the input of harassed women who are likely to agree that harassment is a serious problem. The previous literature has increased the awareness of sexual harassment but additional scientific research in the area of sexual harassment of working women is needed.

Perhaps the earliest study of harassment was a little-publicized survey conducted in Ithaca, New York, in 1975. It was sponsored by an organization entitled Working Women United. During a speakout on sexual harassment an informal survey was conducted to measure the extent of the problem of sexual harassment. The definition of sexual harassment used in the survey was "any repeated and unwanted sexual comments, looks, suggestions or physical contact that



you find objectionable or offensive and causes you discomfort on the job" (Farley, 1978:20). Approximately 150 women at the speakout were surveyed along with the female members of a civil service employee's union in Binghamton, New York. Seventy percent of these women reported being sexually harassed at least once during their employment history. Furthermore, 92 percent of the women surveyed agreed that sexual harassment is a serious problem for working women today (Farley, 1978:21). While a pioneer effort and suggestive of the fact that sexual harassment may be widespread, the survey may have been biased toward strong agreement that harassment is a serious problem. The survey was conducted at a speakout aimed at increasing the awareness of sexual harassment. The respondents at such a speakout are encouraged to voice their feelings about what is already defined as a problem by many present at the gathering.

A more widely-publicized survey on working women was compiled by Redbook Magazine in 1976 and included questions on sexual harassment. Over 9,000 women responded to the survey. Nearly 90 percent stated that they had been sexually harassed and agreed that harassment was a problem for working women today (Safran, 1976:21). Although a large number of women responded to the survey, it represents a very select group: the readership of Redbook Magazine. Furthermore, women are more likely to respond to such a survey if they have already experienced sexual

harassment or at least are aware of it. Women who have not been harassed are less likely to take the time to complete such a questionnaire.

In New York in 1976 the Ad Hoc Group on Equal Rights for Women surveyed 875 staff members at the United Nations, 73 percent of whom were women. Over half of the women responding reported they either had personally experienced an incident of sexual harassment while employed at the United Nations or were aware of sexual pressures on female employees at the United Nations (Farley, 1978:21). The results of this survey may be misleading. The report states that half of the women responding reported experiencing sexual harassment or were aware of its existence. We are not able to determine the exact number of women who responded to the survey nor the number who actually experienced harassment. Also, we must consider again that women who have experienced sexual harassment are more likely to respond to such a questionnaire than women who have not experienced harassment.

Although biased, these studies do point to the possible existence of a serious and widespread problem of sexual harassment of working women, with probable repercussions involving their work as well as their families. Since publication of the previously mentioned studies there has been increasing interest in the topic of harassment in both the popular media and the academic community. There have been several books published on sexual harassment.

In Sexual Shakedown: The Sexual Harassment of

Working Women (Farley, 1978) the author, a journalist, discusses harassment utilizing numerous case histories and data from personal interviews. Farley discusses harassment of women in both traditional and nontraditional jobs, why harassment exists, and what can be done to prevent it. Her book was the first published on the sexual harassment of women. Backhouse and Cohen authored The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women (1978). The authors offer an historical account of harassment and view it as an expression of power. They utilize case histories, interviews, and survey results to document the pervasiveness of harassment in the workplace. In addition, the authors offer several ways for women to avoid harassment and for management and unions to handle complaints. In Sexual Harassment of Working Women (MacKinnon, 1979) the author analyzes the legal questions regarding sexual harassment. She discusses harassment and its prevalence and utilizes current legal cases involving harassment to show that harassment does constitute unlawful sex-based discrimination. However, most of the books on harassment rely on case histories and past inadequate survey work on the subject. Only recently has the study of sexual harassment of working women gained the attention of the academic community.

The National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs sponsored a study on sexual harassment of postsecondary students to be "an increasingly visible

problem of great, but as yet unascertained, dimensions . . . and is correctly viewed as a form of illegal sex-based discrimination" (Till, 1980:3).

A representative of the Washington-based Center for Women's Policy Studies testified before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. He estimated "at least 18 million women experienced overt sexual harassment during 1979-80" (Omaha World-Herald, 22 April 1980). The Illinois Task Force on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in conjunction with Sangamon State University surveyed over 5,000 female state employees. More than half of the women who responded reported having been subject to sexual harassment ranging from "leers to sexual propositions." Nearly 65 percent of the respondents agreed that sexual harassment is a serious problem for many working women (Omaha World-Herald, 5 March 1980).

In August 1981, the Field Research Corporation released the results of a California-based survey which found that 10 percent of the 827 women responding to a survey on sexual harassment were forced to quit their jobs to avoid harassment. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents agreed that it is sexual harassment if a person is forced to engage in sex to obtain or keep a job, or gain a promotion, raise, or more favorable work assignments (Omaha World-Herald, 5 September 1981). Since the nature of this sample is unknown, no conclusions can be drawn.

In 1978 a questionnaire was distributed to all

female members of the Eastern Sociological Society, 122 members. The response rate was 25 percent with 54 percent of the respondents agreeing that they had suffered mild to severe sexual harassment at some point in their professional career (New England Sociologist, Fall, 1977:45). (The terms 'mild', 'severe', and 'sexual harassment' were not defined in the study.)

Personnel and employee relations departments in business and industry are becoming aware of sexual harassment in the workplace. Several articles have been published recently detailing the need for appropriate grievance channels for victims of harassment (Driscoll, 1981; Ginsburg and Koreski, 1977). A number of articles on sexual harassment have also appeared recently in law journals (Seymour, 1979). The legal issue is whether an employer can be held responsible under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act if a supervisor sexually harasses a co-worker. Sexual harassment is now viewed as an actionable form of illegal sex-based discrimination.

Over the past decade there has been a large increase in the number of working women in both traditional and non-traditional jobs (Backhouse and Cohen, 1978:71). Due to the current economic conditions in this country the two-job family may be an economic necessity (Thurow, 1980). There has also been an increase in the number of single-parent families headed by women (Farley, 1978:48). All of these statistics lend support to the assumption that a

greater number of women may be affected by sexual harassment of working women. Sexual harassment is no longer an isolated personal problem. It is now viewed as a social problem worthy of scientific research.

Being able to document the existence of harassment of working women is one thing. Discovering the extent of the problem and why it happens is more difficult. There is speculation that harassment may be the result of the massive transformation of the sex composition of the workplace. Some men who are not used to working with women may only be able to respond to women in a sexual manner. Women in the workplace may not be treated as peers and co-workers but as potential sexual conquests (Omaha World-Herald, 5 September 1981). Researchers have utilized several sociological theories to explain what appear to be high levels of sexual harassment of working women. In conflict theory sexual harassment is not conceptualized as sexual eroticism but as an expression of power by the male toward the female. Another theory, exchange theory, is used to explain how harassed women handle the unequal exchange of rewards and costs between the harasser and the victim.

Conflict Theory and Sexual Harassment

A conflict theory of sexual stratification has been developed by Randall Collins, who utilizes the work of Max Weber and Freud (Collins, 1971). Collins attempts to explain the sexual discrimination of women in employment as

a result of the subordination of women as a class within a system of sexual stratification. He believes there is a system of sexual stratification in our society which differs from, but interacts with, other forms of stratification such as political and economic. The basis of this sexual stratification is two pronged: first, the human sexual drive, and second, male physical dominance over the female.

Collins relies on Freud's work regarding the universality of the human sexual drive and on Weber's conflict model of stratification. From Weber's work Collins summarizes, "the persons struggle for as much dominance as their resources permit; that changes in resources lead to changes in the structure of dominance; and that ideals are used as weapons in these struggles, both to unify status communities and to justify power interests" (Collins, 1971:3). Collins takes an historical perspective and uses ideal types to show how changes in the social organization of male violence toward females and changes in the economic market shaped the resources available to both men and women.

The four ideal types of social structure are as follows: 1) low technology tribal societies; 2) fortified households in stratified societies; 3) private households in a market economy; and 4) advanced market economies. Each type of market structure offered certain resources to both males and females, specific sexual roles and bargaining power, and a dominant sexual ideology. In the past when men dominated the economic resources and controlled property

women utilized their personal attractiveness as a bargaining tool: the Victorian ideal of femininity. Women became the "Romantic Ideal," privatized and set off from other women by their virtue and beauty. Thus, women using this feminine ideal were the farthest removed from the economic marketplace and employability. Those women who chose or were forced to enter the workplace were in the least favorable position to utilize the feminine ideal. The dominating ideologies of female chastity, romantic love, and the marriage bond left women with little bargaining power in the workplace.

Over time women have gradually entered the work- ⁹
place and have entered into many professions which in the
past have been male dominated. Today women have increased
bargaining resources and this is in turn causing changes in
the dominating sexual roles and ideologies. The increase
in bargaining resources is a result of not only changes in
the market economy but changes in the social organization
of male violence and the context in which such violence

occurs. ³ In the past when situations of male violence were widespread and no attempt was made at state control, women had to rely on men for physical protection. In the past, male dominance and the use of male force to control women was legitimate. As the structure of home life changed the state began to assume the claim to be the legitimate force to dispense violence. As men began to restrain other men through the social organization of violence, the

bargaining power of women increased (Collins, 1971:18).

To summarize, Collins believes that the availability and arrangement of resources determine the variation in sexual stratification and in sexual ideals. Resources in general refer to means of male domination of females, the social organization of violence and the economic market. Therefore, as women continue to strive for equalization in the economic marketplace they will be met with continued shifts in sexual ideology. Males as a group will continue to support and reinforce an existing market of sexual relations which view women as sexual property. Women ¹⁰ entering the workforce and striving for higher occupational positions will attempt to utilize increased bargaining resources and will support a differing sexual ideology which emphasizes a more equal relationship between the sexes. ³ (For a further elaboration of Collins' work see Table 1.1 in Appendix 2.)

Collins' model of a conflict theory of sexual stratification may prove valuable when applied to sexual harassment of women in the workplace. Our society is experiencing changes in traditional sex roles which have resulted in women entering many previously male-dominated professions and trades. One male response to these changes in the workplace may be an increase in sexual harassment of working women (Backhouse and Cohen, 1978:42).

Collins' model is similar to the work of other researchers who link the analysis of sexual harassment to

the social dynamics of male physical violence and social domination of women, with an emphasis on the male physical violence. Their work suggests that a continuum of male violence can be constructed with the highly visible and most violent act of rape at one end and the less violent and often more subtle form of violence, sexual harassment, at the other end (Martin and Fein, 1978:2).

Exchange Theory and Sexual Harassment

An article appearing in Quest by Silverman utilizes exchange theory to explain the sexual harassment of working women (Silverman, 1976). She states that harassment can be analyzed from the perspective of a prostitute and her client. In interactions between the prostitute and her customer, the customer offers some sort of economic reward in exchange for sexual favors. Applying this model to the work environment, a male who may harass a female employee will offer economic gains (a raise, a promotion, etc.) for sexual favors.

Exchange theory was given its fullest development in sociology by Peter Blau. His work in exchange theory may provide another model with which to analyze sexual harassment (Blau, 1967). A key point in his analysis is that in social exchange it is not necessary for each person to profit equally. Blau uses a dyadic example to analyze social exchange between Person and Other. He believes there are four alternatives if equivalent service is not exchanged. These four alternatives are as follows:

1. If a Person does not receive equivalent service from the Other, then the Person may try to coerce the Other.
2. The Person may attempt to gain assistance from another party.
3. The Person may find other ways of getting along without the help of the Other.
4. The Person may subordinate him or herself, thus giving the Other power over them as an inducement for the Other to furnish the needed assistance.

If applied to sexual harassment of working women, Person represents the woman and Other represents the harasser.

The same alternatives can then be applied as follows:

1. If a Woman is harassed she can attempt to coerce the Male Harasser through complaining to his superiors or filing a sexual harassment suit.
2. A Woman may choose to obtain assistance from another source.
3. A Woman may find other ways of getting along without the assistance offered by the Male Harasser, find employment elsewhere, or quit working entirely.
4. A Woman may agree to subordinate herself, thus giving her Male Harasser power over her in return for assistance which includes her employment and related items such as knowledge and mobility.

The woman as subordinate must evaluate the demands of her harasser. If she feels the demands are excessive in relation to what she will receive she may feel exploited. If she agrees to the demands of her harasser, she then legitimizes his power and authority. Power is defined by Blau as "one-sided dependence" (Blau, 1976). Availability of alternatives keeps the harassed woman from being

dependent upon her harasser. In turn, the harasser will attempt to close off as many alternatives as possible to maintain his power and authority.

These two general theories are complementary rather than competing with regard to sexual harassment. Blau's work on exchange theory offers a model which may be useful in explaining why women react as they do when subjected to sexual harassment. Collins's work on a conflict theory of sexual stratification may provide an explanation as to why sexual harassment of working women exists. Increased (12) research on the sexual harassment of women ought to bring about a better understanding of why it occurs. This understanding may assist both men and women to cope with changing sex roles in the workplace. 3

Attribution Theory and Locus of Control

Two other theories were found to be useful when the data from the survey instrument was analyzed. Attribution theory was applied to the analysis of the data on the motivation for harassment. Weiner (1972) postulates that individuals attribute causality for events externally or internally. Internal causality refers to a person's abilities or qualities while external causality refers to environmental circumstances. Causality is also defined as being stable or unstable; a relatively permanent condition or a condition which is subject to change.

The concept of locus of control was first analyzed

by Rotter (1966). He states that individuals who express an external locus of control believe that events happen because of luck, fate, chance, or the power and influence of other people. Individuals who express an internal locus of control believe that events happen because of their own behavior or personal characteristics. An individual expressing an external locus of control would be less willing to predict the outcome of future events due to the preceived complexity of unknown and uncontrollable external forces. The concept of locus of control was useful in the analysis of the data on respondents' perceptions of future harassment.

Research Design

Although there is increasing attention to the seriousness and prevalence of sexual harassment of working women, there has been little investigation of who is harassed and why. Furthermore, little is known about the variations in the types of sexual harassment and how women have responded to being sexually harassed. The demographic or social structural variations in harassment of working women have not been thoroughly investigated.

Since sexual harassment has been relatively unresearched until recently, the research goal is hypothesis generation rather than hypothesis testing. Data was collected in a number of different areas which previous research or theory suggest might be important. In addition

to measuring the sheer prevalence of sexual harassment in one institutional setting, certain demographic variables associated with sexual harassment were investigated. Variables such as age, marital status, income, number of dependents, educational level, and years of employment may be associated with the probability of a woman being sexually harassed in the workplace or in the classroom.

The research also focused on the general awareness of respondents to the subject of harassment and how they would define harassment. Data was also gathered on the perceived seriousness of the problem of sexual harassment by harassed women as well as nonharassed women.

This research also focused on the process of sexual harassment. This included the type of harassment (verbal versus physical) and the degree of harassment (sexual jokes versus demands for sex). The process of harassment also includes how the victim feels about the harassment, what she feels motivated her harasser, how she handled the harassment and the consequences.

The research looked at the workplace itself. The organizational structure and sexual composition of the workplace may influence the probability of harassment. The type of work setting (small clerical office versus a large food production area), the type of work (manual labor versus teaching), and the ratio of males to females in the workplace may be associated with harassment.

The research is also concerned with status relations

between the harasser and the woman who is harassed. Past research has found that the harasser is often not the woman's direct supervisor. Many times the harasser is a co-worker, a client, or a customer (Farley, 1978:52). In this research data was gathered on status relationships between men and women in the workplace. This included the number of supervisory males and females and the number of nonsupervisory males and females in the work setting where the harassment occurred.

To summarize, a questionnaire was used to gather data in the following areas:

1. The demographic characteristics of harassed and nonharassed women.
2. The level of awareness and the definition of harassment by harassed and nonharassed women.
3. The prevalence of sexual harassment of working women in a selected institutional setting.
4. The process of sexual harassment including type of harassment, feelings about harassment, feelings about harasser's motivations, the handling of harassment, and the consequences.
5. The characteristics of the workplace where the harassment occurred.
6. The status relations between the harasser and the victim.

Chapter Contents

Chapter II describes the method and sample. The survey instrument is discussed along with the population

which was surveyed. Selected sociodemographic characteristics of harassed and nonharassed women are compared. In addition, selected sociodemographic characteristics of sexually harassed women at the time of harassment are compared with the total number of respondents currently.

Chapter III is on the awareness and the definition of sexual harassment of working women from the perspective of both harassment and nonharassed women. Data was also gathered on respondents' perceptions of the seriousness of the problem of sexual harassment.

In Chapter IV is a discussion of the process of sexual harassment. This includes the type of sexual harassment, how the victim felt, how the victim handled the harassment, and the consequences. It also includes a section on motivation of the harasser from the harassed woman's point of view.

Chapter V reports data on the power and status relations between the harasser and the harassed woman. This chapter also contains an analysis of data gathered on respondents' perceptions of possible future harassment, their own and women in general.

Chapter VI contains conclusions and summations of the substantive chapters. It outlines the weaknesses of the research and makes recommendations for further research on sexual harassment.

CHAPTER II

METHOD AND SAMPLE

Sexual harassment of working women has only begun to receive widespread attention over the last five to six years. However, no concise working definition of sexual harassment emerges from a review of the popular media and the limited number of academic journal articles available. It is also difficult to determine how long sexual harassment has existed or its pervasiveness.

Since a standard definition and a theoretical basis for analysis of sexual harassment are not clearly delineated, the aims of this research are information gathering and hypothesis generation and not hypothesis testing. This is an exploratory study dealing with the perceptions and attitudes of women about sexual harassment, their definitions of harassment, and their levels of awareness and knowledgeability of sexual harassment. The study relies heavily on open-ended questions that allow the respondents to express themselves in their own terms.

Instrument

This research has two foci. One is to gather data on specific incidents of sexual harassment. The other is to compare harassed and nonharassed women's attitudes and perceptions about sexual harassment.

To gather data on harassment specific questions were included on the process of harassment. The survey instrument contained questions on the types of sexual harassment women encountered; how women dealt with the harassment, both physically and psychologically; the motivation of their harasser; and the consequences of handling the harassment in the manner chosen. The emphasis was on the process of sexual harassment and how women mediated the situation in which sexual harassment occurred. The greatest amount of this data requires qualitative analysis. In Analyzing Social Settings, Lofland comments that qualitative analysis is primarily the task of discovering the "characteristics of a social phenomenon, the forms it assumes, the variations it displays" (Lofland, 1971:13).

Several closed-ended questions on the process of sexual harassment were also included. These questions related to how women chose to handle harassment and the resulting consequences. Limited sociodemographic data was also gathered on the process of sexual harassment. Questions on age and job position of the harasser and the harassed women at the time of the harassment were also contained in the survey instrument. The data resulting from these questions was quantitatively analyzed.

The second focus of the research was a comparison of attitudes and perceptions of harassed and nonharassed women. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were included on awareness and definition of sexual harassment.

Questions on awareness related to general knowledge of the term sexual harassment and awareness of specific incidents of sexual harassment. Questions on definition allowed respondents to define harassment in their own terms as well as choose from a list of behaviors considered sexual harassment by other researchers who have investigated this subject. Open-ended questions were included on the possibility of future harassment, both of the respondent and working women in general.

Sociodemographic data was also obtained on both groups of women, harassed and nonharassed. The survey instrument contained questions on age, marital status, number of dependents, yearly personal income, spouse's personal income, years of education, and years of employment.

The questionnaire was pretested prior to mailing. Twenty women who were acquaintances of the researcher were asked to complete the questionnaire. Seventeen women completed it. Subsequently, each of these women met with the researcher to answer questions on clarity of the questionnaire, needed additions or deletions, and time required to complete the questionnaire. Only minor word changes for increased clarity were recommended by several respondents. No major changes were recommended. It took most of the respondents less than one hour to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire and a cover letter were mailed to the private residences of each of the women in the sample. Attached to the questionnaire was an envelope for return of

the completed questionnaire through the university inter-campus mail. The cover letter requested that the completed questionnaire be returned within two weeks of receipt. The cover letter stated that each respondent was free to decline participation totally or to decline to answer any particular questions. Each respondent was also informed that all responses were anonymous and no one other than this researcher had access ^(ot) any of the data. (A copy of the questionnaire and the cover letter appear in Appendix 1).

This researcher was aware of the risks to subjects in disclosing sensitive information. Therefore, the questionnaires were mailed to the private residence of each respondent. It was felt that such possible sensitive information could be handled best in the privacy of one's own home, away from the workplace where possible instances of harassment may have occurred. In this manner the confidentiality of each respondent was protected. Otherwise, if questionnaires had been sent to the workplace, it is possible that they could have fallen into the hands of the person who harassed a particular respondent. The respondent could have then suffered adversely. Also, respondents may have been more willing to answer questions in greater detail in the privacy of their homes instead of the workplace.

Sample

The population selected for this research was the female employees and graduate students at an urban

university in a medium-sized midwestern city. The campus has a student population of approximately 15,000, half fulltime and half parttime. There is no student housing on campus. Students reside in off-campus housing or with parents.

This population was chosen for two reasons. One reason was the ease of access. The other reason was that such a population offered built-in social, economic, and occupational stratification. Questionnaires were sent to women regardless of their occupational or professional status; administrators and faculty were included as well as secretaries, graduate students, and food service workers. This provided an excellent opportunity to investigate sexual harassment across occupational lines. Many previous studies of sexual harassment have investigated only one particular professional or occupational setting and did not analyze sexual harassment at different stratification levels.

Questionnaires were mailed to 469 women. Of that number, 405 were women whose names and home addresses were listed in the 1981-1982 University Faculty/Staff Telephone Guide. The other sixty-four women were university graduate students. Their names were obtained from the University Graduate Student Association and from departments at the university who offered graduate programs and agreed to provide names and home addresses of current female graduate students. Of the 469 questionnaires mailed, 109 were returned; a response rate of 23.24 percent.

In some surveys such a response rate would be considered low. However, this is a good response rate for a study of this kind for three reasons. The first reason is that sexual harassment is a very sensitive subject. The nature of the subject matter may have kept some women from responding. The second reason is that questions were asked about the workplace, co-workers, and superiors. Some women may not have wanted to supply such personal information and may have been concerned about confidentiality in spite of assurances. The third reason is that this is an exploratory study using many open-ended questions. Answering such a lengthy questionnaire may have discouraged some women.

It is important to state that the low response rate limits the range of analysis and the generalizability of the findings. A follow-up was not possible due to the fact that all respondents were anonymous. There was no way of knowing who had answered the survey. If there had been a higher rate of response it may have been possible to make several generalizations about the total population; all female employees and graduate students at the university.

The distribution of the sociodemographic characteristics of the total sample is presented in Table 2.1. There is large variation in the ages of the respondents. Ages range from under twenty-five to over fifty. The largest percentage of women, nearly 39 percent, were between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five. Close to one-third of the women were between the ages of thirty-six and fifty.

Nearly 60 percent of the women were married while approximately 23 percent were never married. Divorced women accounted for 9.26 percent of the sample and widows represented 5.6 percent. Over 50 percent of the women claimed dependents for whom they provided at least half of the financial support. Nearly 30 percent claimed one dependent, while less than one percent claimed four or more dependents.

Yearly personal incomes for the women in the sample ranged from under \$5,000 to over \$20,000. Over one-fourth of the women had yearly incomes between \$5,000 and \$10,000. The same percentage of women had incomes in the \$10,000-15,000 range. Over 21 percent of the sample earned over \$20,000.

All the women in the sample were at least high school graduates. Nearly 20 percent had taken some college courses. Close to 70 percent of the sample were college graduates. A large percentage of women, nearly 30 percent, held a Master's Degree. The high level of education represents a skewed sample and does not represent the general population. It limits the range of the statistical analysis and the generalizability of the results.

Over 62 percent of the sample had been employed outside the home over ten years. However, only 17.31 percent had been employed in their present position for over ten years. Nearly one-third of the sample had been employed at their present position for two or less years.

Over 95 percent of the sample were white and only 3.85 percent black. The sample included no Hispanics, Asians, or Native Americans. Slightly more than 4.8 percent of the women did not respond to this question on race. Over 61 percent of the sample were Protestant and 20.43 percent were Catholic. Less than three percent of the sample were Jewish or Orthodox. Over 15 percent of the women chose "Other" as their response to religious affiliation; 18.50 percent did not respond.

Analysis

Analysis of the data from the survey instrument was both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative analysis was used to compare sociodemographic characteristics of harassed and nonharassed women. Also, selected sociodemographic characteristics of the harassed women at the time of their harassment were compared to characteristics of the total sample. The questions on definition, awareness, and the process of harassment were primarily analyzed qualitatively.

In an attempt to reduce researcher bias the analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken on two separate occasions. The researcher began her development of categories by noting key words and phrases from each protocol. Frequently occurring words and phrases formed the basis for categories. Responses were grouped into the categories, which might be further specified as new responses.

This process of selecting key words, developing

categories, and assigning responses to categories was repeated on a second occasion. The results of the two analyses were very similar and were therefore utilized. It is hoped that this process of analyzing the qualitative data assisted in reducing researcher bias which is a problem inherent in all qualitative research.

Comparison of Sociodemographic
Characteristics of Harassed
and Nonharassed Women

Table 2.1 presents a distribution of the following sociodemographic characteristics for harassed and non-harassed women: age, marital status, number of dependents, yearly personal income, spouse's yearly personal income, years of education, years of employment outside the home, and years of employment at their present positions.

Age

Age appears as an important characteristic distinguishing the two groups. Women in the harassed group were younger; 57.90 percent were age thirty-five or under. In the nonharassed group 43.66 percent were age thirty-five or under. Over 32 percent of the nonharassed women were over fifty while only 5.36 percent of the harassed women were over fifty. This comparison is of current age and does not include the age of harassed women at the time of their harassment.

One reason for the age differences may be that younger women are harassed more often than older women.

TABLE 2.1

COMPARISON OF SEXUALLY HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN
BY SELECTED SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total of Both Groups	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AGE						
Under 25	5	13.16	6	8.45	11	10.19
25 - 35	17	44.74	25	35.21	42	38.53
36 - 50	14	36.84	24	38.81	38	34.86
Over 50	2	5.26	16	22.54	18	16.51
Total	38	100.00	71	100.00	109	100.00
MARTIAL STATUS						
Never married	10	26.32	15	21.42	25	23.15
Married	21	55.26	44	62.86	65	60.19
Unmarried, living together	0	0.00	1	1.43	1	.93
Separated	1	2.63	0	0.00	1	.93
Divorced	5	13.16	5	7.14	10	9.26
Widowed	1	2.63	5	7.14	6	5.56
Total	38	100.00	70	100.00	108	100.00

TABLE 2.1 (continued)

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total of Both Groups	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<u>NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS</u>						
None	17	44.74	36	50.70	53	48.63
One	8	21.05	24	33.80	32	29.36
Two	7	18.42	8	11.27	15	13.76
Three	5	13.16	3	2.75	8	7.34
Four or more	1	2.63	0	0.00	1	.92
Total	38	100.00	71	100.00	109	100.00
<u>YEARLY PERSONAL INCOME</u>						
Under \$5,000	2	5.26	10	14.71	12	11.32
\$5,000 - \$10,000	11	28.95	16	23.53	27	25.47
\$10,000 - \$15,000	10	26.32	17	25.00	27	25.47
\$15,000 - \$20,000	7	18.42	10	14.71	17	16.04
Over \$20,000	8	21.05	15	22.10	23	21.70
Total	38	100.00	68	100.00	106	100.00
<u>SPOUSE'S YEARLY INCOME</u>						
Under \$5,000	0	0.00	1	2.32	1	1.56
\$5,000 - \$10,000	3	14.28	3	6.98	6	9.38
\$10,000 - \$15,000	2	9.52	3	6.98	5	7.81
\$15,000 - \$20,000	6	28.58	10	23.26	16	25.00
Over \$20,000	10	47.62	26	60.47	36	56.25
Total	21	100.00	43	100.00	64	100.00

TABLE 2.1 (continued)

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total of Both Groups	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
YEARS OF EDUCATION						
Grade school	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Some high school	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
High school graduate	1	2.63	7	10.00	8	7.41
Business/technical	1	2.63	2	2.86	3	2.78
Some college	11	28.95	10	14.29	21	19.44
College graduate	5	13.16	8	11.43	13	12.04
Some graduate school	4	10.53	12	17.14	16	14.81
Master's degree	14	36.84	(18)	25.71	32	29.63
Ph.D., M.D., J.D., Ed.D. or other doctorate	2	5.26	(13)	18.57	15	13.89
Total	38	100.00	70	100.00	108	100.00
YEARS EMPLOYED OUTSIDE HOME						
Two or less	2	5.26	3	4.29	5	4.63
Three to five	1	2.63	8	11.43	9	8.33
Five to ten	13	34.21	13	18.57	26	24.07
Over Ten	22	57.89	(46)	65.71	68	62.96
Total	38	100.00	70	100.00	108	100.00

TABLE 2.1 (continued)

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total of Both Groups	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<u>YEARS AT PRESENT POSITION</u> Two or less Three to five Five to ten Over ten	17	47.22	17	25.00	34	32.69
	9	25.01	17	25.00	26	25.00
	7	19.44	19	27.94	26	25.00
	3	8.33	15	22.06	18	17.31
	36	100.00	68	100.00	104	100.00
Total						

Younger women may appear more vulnerable; their youthfulness and newness to the job market may reflect a certain naivete. This may lead a potential harasser to feel he may take advantage of such vulnerability to enhance his power and superior position in the workplace. Another commonly offered explanation is physical attractiveness; however, sexual attraction as an explanation for harassment will be minimized and power will be emphasized in discussions in Chapter V.

Vulnerability as an explanation for younger women being harassed more often does not fully explain the differences in harassment experience between the two age groups. After all, the nonharassed women were young once and new to the job market. Yet this group reports little history of sexual harassment. One explanation may be that they possess certain psychological characteristics which make them less vulnerable to harassment. They may exhibit an assertive demeanor, a self-assuredness, which removes the appearance of vulnerability and the prospect of potential harassment. These women may be older working women who have learned how to "handle" harassment. These older nonharassed women may have already developed the skills to ward off attempts at harassment to which younger ones are vulnerable. However, this explanation of why older women are harassed less than younger women is only speculative; there is no data to confirm such a position.

Another explanation of the differences in age between

the two groups would involve the changes taking place in the American workplace. With increasing numbers of women entering the job market, reports of sexual harassment have increased. Some researchers believe this may be a real increase in sexual harassment in the workplace as a response by some males to what they feel is a threat to their domain. Therefore, a cohort explanation would suggest that increased sexual harassment may be due to changes in the American workplace over time.

Combining this cohort explanation with the assumption that younger women are more vulnerable provides a possible explanation for variability in harassment by age in the sample. If this is the case, we would predict that later studies would show that younger women, new to the job market, are harassed more often. We would also expect that if surveyed in the future these women would report past harassment. Therefore, in future surveys older women might be as likely to report harassment as younger women.

On the other hand, some researchers believe that sexual harassment has always been with us but has gone largely unreported. In the past women may have viewed their harassment as their own personal problem or as their own fault. The older women in this sample may have been less ready to define a situation as harassment or to disclose such an experience. In any case an analysis of the ages of the women in the two groups leads to the conclusion that it is relatively younger women who report sexual harassment.

Marital Status

A comparison of marital status shows that the greatest differences between the two groups are in the never married and the divorced categories. In the harassed group nearly 40 percent were either never married or were divorced. Only 28.56 percent of the nonharassed women were either never married or divorced. The percentage of divorced women in the harassed group is almost twice that of the nonharassed group; 13.16 percent (N=5) as compared to 7.14 percent (N=5).

There are also differences between the two groups in the married and widowed categories. Nearly 63 percent of the nonharassed women were married while 55.62 percent of the harassed women were married. Over twice as many of the nonharassed women were widows as compared to harassed women. The higher number of widows in the nonharassed group is probable due to age differences between the groups.

The two groups differ with respect to divorce and dependents. Divorced women who were sexually harassed have higher numbers of dependents than divorced women who were not harassed. All of the divorced women who were sexually harassed had at least one dependent. Only 40 percent of the divorced women who were not harassed had dependents (Table 2.1).

There are also differences in sheer numbers of dependents between the two groups. Nearly 32 percent of the harassed women claimed two or three dependents for which

they provided at least half of the financial support. Only 14 percent of the nonharassed women had two or three dependents. As the number of dependents increased, the financial burden also increases for both married and divorced women. The concept of vulnerability may be applied to the condition of having dependents for whom one is financially responsible in much the same manner as it was previously applied to age. A divorced woman who is financially responsible for herself and one or more dependents may be viewed as vulnerable. The need to maintain employment is vital for women who have dependents to support. To a lesser extent the same holds true for single women who are themselves their only means of support. As youth may reflect a certain vulnerability, being single or divorced with dependents may also project vulnerability. The theme of vulnerability will be discussed in Chapter V on power, status and the process of harassment.

Personal Income

A comparison of current yearly personal incomes for the two groups shows no major differences. Also a comparison of personal income for sexually harassed women at the time of harassment and currently is of little value. Real income cannot be determined for comparative purposes because the year the harassment took place cannot be determined.

Family Income

A comparison of family income cannot be completed with the available data from this survey instrument. Past

research has shown that respondents are more likely to answer questions about personal income if income brackets are used rather than requests for exact yearly income. Therefore, questions about income utilized income brackets to achieve the highest response rate. Therefore, it is not possible to combine respondent income and spouse income for a comparison of family income.

Education

Both groups rank above average in years of education. This is a reflection of the academic setting from which the sample was chosen. Levels of education differ between the two groups especially at the doctorate level. The percentage of nonharassed women with Ph.D., M.D., J.D., Ed.D., or other doctorate was more than three times that of harassed women; 18.57 percent as compared to 5.26 percent (N=2). The advanced degree status may ward off harassment; such women may not appear vulnerable due to the status of their professional position. It may also reflect certain attitudes such women have acquired as they have worked to achieve their professional status. These attitudes may ward off potential harassers. These points will be examined in Chapter V.

Years of Employment Outside the Home

The most notable differences between the two groups in years of employment outside the home is in the five to ten year category. Over 34 percent of the harassed women are in this category as compared to only 18.31 percent of

the nonharassed women. A large percentage of women in both groups have been employed outside the home over ten years; 65.71 percent of the nonharassed women as compared with 57.89 percent of the harassed women. Few women in either group had been employed outside the home for two years or less; 5.26 percent of the harassed group as compared to 4.29 percent of the nonharassed group. This would appear to contradict the hypothesis that women new to the job market are harassed more often because they present a naivete or vulnerability.

Years of Employment at Their
Present Position

Women in the nonharassed group have been employed at their present positions longer than women in the harassed group. Nearly 50 percent of the nonharassed women had been employed at their current positions over five years while 22 percent had been employed over ten years. Only 27.77 percent of the harassed women had been employed at their present position for over five years. These differences may be due to the age differences between the two groups as previously discussed. It may also represent a less stable employment career for sexually harassed women. Over 47 percent of the harassed women had been employed at their present position for two years or less. This compares with 25 percent for the nonharassed group. Current research shows that many sexually harassed women have been forced to quit their jobs rather than face continued sexual harassment.

The most distinguishable differences between sexually harassed women and nonharassed women are age and marital status. Sexually harassed women are younger than nonharassed women and are more often either never married or divorced. Educational differences are most notable at the higher levels of education. Over three times as many nonharassed women had a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., Ed.D., or other doctorate than harassed women. When comparing length of employment at their current position, over 47 percent of the harassed women had been employed two years or less as compared with nearly 25 percent of the nonharassed women.

Comparison of Sociodemographic
Characteristics of Sexually
Harassed Women at the Time
of Harassment and All
Respondents Currently

Sexually harassed women at the time of harassment and all respondents currently are compared on four demographic characteristics: age, marital status, number of dependents, and yearly personal income. Table 2.2 represents the distribution of these characteristics. The purpose of the comparison is to observe whether or not sexual harassment is selective; that is, are the women who are sexually harassed a distinct group relative to the general sociodemographic composition of the institutional workplace as represented by the respondents to this survey. Since current status may not be the same as the status at the time of the harassment, it is important to look specifically at the latter. Since it is impossible to

TABLE 2.2
COMPARISON OF SEXUALLY HARASSED WOMEN AT THE
TIME OF HARASSMENT AND ALL
RESPONDENTS CURRENTLY BY SELECTED
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Sexually Harassed Women at the Time of Harassment		All Respondents Currently	
	N	%	N	%
<u>AGE</u>				
Under 25	15	39.47	11	10.09
25 - 35	19 ¹⁹	50.00	42	38.53
36 - 50	4	10.53	38	34.86
Over 50	0	0.00	18	16.51
Total	38	100.00	109	100.00
<u>MARTIAL STATUS</u>				
Never married	19 ¹⁹	50.00	25	23.15
Married	10	26.32	65	60.19
Unmarried, living together	1	2.63	1	.93
Separated	0	0.00	1	.93
Divorced	8	21.05	10	9.25
Widowed	0	0.00	6	5.56
Total	38	100.00	108	100.00
<u>YEARLY INCOME</u>				
Under \$5,000	8	22.22	12	11.32
\$5,000 - \$10,000	14	38.89	27	25.47
\$10,000 - \$15,000	10	27.78	27	25.47
\$15,000 - \$20,000	4	11.11	17	16.04
Over \$20,000	0	0.00	23	21.70
Total	36	100.00	106	100.00
<u>NO. OF DEPENDENTS</u>				
None	23	60.53	53	48.62
One	4	10.53	32	29.36
Two	6	15.79	15	13.76
Three	4	10.53	8	7.34
Four or more	1	2.63	1	.92
Total	38	100.00	109	100.00

obtain data on the workforce of each woman's place of employment when harassed and city census data cannot be taken to be representative of academic employees, the demographic context of the academic workplace being studied, as represented by all respondents, is used as the best available baseline.

Age

At the time of harassment nearly 90 percent of the harassed women were under the age of thirty-five. Over 39 percent were under twenty-five. In the total sample slightly more than 48 percent were thirty-five or under and only 10.09 percent were under twenty-five. The women in the sexually harassed group were younger at the time of harassment than the total number of respondents.

Marital Status

Over 70 percent of the harassed women were never married or were divorced at the time of the harassment. Only 26.32 percent of the harassed women were married when the harassment occurred. The percentages are almost reversed for all respondents. Currently over 60 percent of all respondents are married and only 32.40 percent have never been married or are divorced.

Yearly Personal Income

At the time of harassment over 61 percent of the harassed women had yearly personal incomes under \$10,000.

None of the harassed women were earning over \$20,000 when the harassment occurred. Currently 34.76 percent of all respondents earn under \$10,000 and 21.70 percent earn over \$20,000. Family incomes cannot be determined at the time of harassment because spouse's income is not known. Also the year the harassment took place is not known. Therefore, considering inflation over time and the lack of data to determine real income, no conclusions can be drawn by comparing income levels at the time of harassment and currently. The data are, however, compatible with the hypothesis that lower income women are more vulnerable; hence more likely to be harassed.

Number of Dependents

Nearly 40 percent of the harassed women had one or more dependents at the time of harassment; over half of all respondents currently had one or more dependents. The reason for fewer dependents in the harassed group may be because 50 percent of the harassed women had not been married at the time of their harassment.

In summation, a comparison of all respondents currently and the sexually harassed women at the time of harassment shows that age and marital status are the most distinguishing characteristics. At the time of harassment the harassed women were relatively younger than the total number of respondents currently. When harassed, over 70 percent of the women were either never married or were

divorced as compared to only 33.11 percent of all respondents currently. This analysis is limited by the fact that data from the workplace of each harassed woman at the time of harassment cannot be obtained, so current data from the academic workplace must serve as a baseline.

Summary

This research has two aims: to gather data on specific incidents of sexual harassment and to compare attitudes and perceptions of harassed and nonharassed women on sexual harassment of working women. A nine page survey instrument was developed with both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The survey instrument was pretested prior to its mailing.

The population of study was all female employees and graduate students at an urban university in a medium-sized midwestern city. The questionnaire was sent to the private residences of 469 women; 405 were female employees and 64 were female graduate students. The response rate was 23.24 percent. Harassed women represented 34.86 percent of the respondents and 64.14 percent were nonharassed women.

A typical woman respondent was between twenty-five and thirty-five, married, and a college graduate. She had one dependent and earned between \$5,000 and \$15,000 a year. Her spouse earned over \$15,000 a year. She had been employed outside the home over ten years but five years or less at her current position (Table 2.1).

The most distinct differences in the sociodemographic characteristics of harassed and nonharassed women are age and marital status. Sexually harassed women are relatively younger and more often have never been married or are divorced.

There are also differences in the level of education for harassed and nonharassed women. Over three times as many nonharassed women had a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., Ed.D., or other doctorate.

Over 50 percent of both groups had been employed outside the home over ten years. However, over 47 percent of the harassed women had been employed at their current position for two years or less as compared to 25 percent of the nonharassed women.

When the sociodemographic characteristics of all respondents currently are compared with the sexually harassed women at the time of the harassment, age and marital status differences are again noticeable. At the time of harassment harassed women were relatively younger than the respondents currently. Nearly 90 percent of the harassed women were under the age of thirty-five at the time of harassment as compared to slightly more than 48 percent of all respondents currently. When harassed, over 70 percent of the women were either never married or were divorced. Currently only 32.40 percent of all respondents has never been married or is divorced.

Much of the remainder of the data was analyzed

qualitatively. The majority of these questions were on awareness, definition, and the process of sexual harassment. The data from the questions on awareness and definition will be discussed in Chapter III. The data from a series of questions on the process of sexual harassment will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Several questions were included comparing the harasser and the victim: age, marital status, income and job status. In addition, questions were included on the possibility of future harassment, of self and of women in general. The data from these questions will be discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER THREE

AWARENESS AND DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This chapter presents a discussion of the awareness and definition of sexual harassment. The attitudes and perceptions of harassed and nonharassed women about awareness and definition will be compared. Questions on awareness were included in the survey instrument to discover how knowledgeable the sample was about sexual harassment and to see if they perceive harassment to be a problem for today's working women. Questions were included to discover how women define sexual harassment and to see what behaviors they would consider sexual harassment.

Awareness

Four questions were included in the questionnaire to measure respondents' levels of awareness of harassment. One question measures general awareness of sexual harassment. Three questions measure the respondents' knowledge of the prevalence of harassment and the degree they feel it to be a problem for working women.

Table 3.1 presents a distribution of the responses to a question asking: "Have you heard of sexual harassment prior to this questionnaire?" There is a high level of awareness of sexual harassment among both groups of women,

TABLE 3.1
 AWARENESS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT
 FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION ONE^a BY SEXUALLY
 HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	1	2.63	0	0.00	1	.93
Yes, but only a few times	8	21.05	19	26.76	27	25.00
Yes and I am very aware of it	29	76.32	51	92.86	80	74.07
Uncertain	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	38	100.00	70	100.00	108	100.00

^aHave you heard of 'sexual harassment' prior to this questionnaire?"

harassed and nonharassed. Over 76 percent of the harassed group were "very aware" while nearly 72 percent of the nonharassed group stated they were "very aware" of harassment. Only one respondent in the total sample was not aware of sexual harassment prior to receiving the questionnaire. This high level of awareness may be the result of the fact the sample was taken from an academic setting. The university has sponsored workshops on women's issues that included discussions of sexual harassment. Also, harassment has been discussed in the classroom in several social science disciplines.

One question on awareness of sexual harassment asked:

Would you agree that sexual harassment (if we define sexual harassment as 'ANY REPEATED AND UNWANTED SEXUAL COMMENTS, LOOKS, SUGGESTIONS, OR PHYSICAL CONTACT THAT YOU FIND OBJECTIONABLE OR OFFENSIVE AND CAUSES YOU DISCOMFORT ON THE JOB OR IN THE CLASSROOM') is a problem for working women today?

Respondents answered by selecting from a five-part Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Nearly 40 percent of the harassed women strongly agreed that sexual harassment was a problem for working women today while only 19.72 percent of the nonharassed women strongly agreed. Combining "agree" and "strongly agree" categories, over 76 percent of the nonharassed women stated they agreed that harassment was a problem as compared with almost 84 percent of the harassed women (Table 3.2).

Nearly the same percentage of women in each group were uncertain whether sexual harassment was a problem for

TABLE 3.2
AWARENESS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION FIVE^a BY SEXUALLY
HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly agree	15	40.54	14	19.72	29	26.85
Agree	16	43.24	40	56.34	56	51.85
Uncertain	6	16.22	13	18.31	19	17.59
Disagree	0	0.00	4	5.63	4	3.70
Strongly disagree	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	37	100.00	71	100.00	108	100.00

^a"Would you agree that sexual harassment (if we define sexual harassment as 'ANY REPEATED AND UNWANTED SEXUAL COMMENTS, LOOKS, SUGGESTIONS OR PHYSICAL CONTACT THAT YOU FIND OBJECTIONABLE OR OFFENSIVE AND CAUSES YOU DISCOMFORT ON THE JOB OR IN THE CLASSROOM') is a problem for working women today?"

working women today; 15.79 percent of the harassed women and 18.31 percent of the nonharassed women. None of the sexually harassed women disagreed or strongly disagreed that harassment was a problem. Nearly 6 percent of the nonharassed women disagreed that harassment was a problem and none of the nonharassed women strongly disagreed.

The most noticeable differences in response between the two groups was at the level of strong agreement. Over twice as many harassed women felt that harassment was a problem for working women as did nonharassed women. These differences are not surprising; having experienced harassment, harassed women are more likely to view sexual harassment as a problem for working women today.

One question on awareness asked: "Are you aware of other women (not including yourself) being sexually harassed at work or in the classroom?" Over 73 percent of the harassed group knew of women other than themselves who had been sexually harassed. Over 53 percent of the nonharassed group knew of other women who had been sexually harassed (Table 3.3). One explanation as to why more harassed women know about other women who had been harassed may be that women tend to confide in other female friends and coworkers about their harassment. In the process of sharing information about their harassment the women in the harassed group may have discovered other harassed women. This will be discussed in Chapter IV on the process of harassment.

Another question asked if the respondents felt that the harassment experienced by these other women was a serious

TABLE 3.3
 AWARENESS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT
 FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SIX^a BY SEXUALLY
 HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	8	21.05	31	43.66	39	35.78
Yes, but only in a few isolated instances	17	44.74	33	46.48	50	45.87
Yes, and it is a common occurrence	11	28.95	5	7.04	16	14.68
Uncertain	2	5.26	2	2.82	4	3.67
Total	38	100.00	71	100.00	109	100.00

^a"Are you aware of other women (not including yourself) being sexually harassed at work or in the classroom?"

TABLE 3.4

AWARENESS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION EIGHT^a BY SEXUALLY
HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total ^b	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	6	22.22	10	26.32	16	24.62
Yes	16	59.26	22	57.89	38	58.46
Uncertain	5	18.52	6	15.79	11	16.92
Total	27	100.00	38	100.00	65	100.00

^a"Do you feel the sexual harassment experienced by these women has been a serious problem for any of these women?"

^bNumber of women in both groups who answered "Yes" to Question Six.

problem for these women. Over 57 percent of the harassed group felt it was a serious problem. Nearly the same percentage of nonharassed women also felt it was a problem (Table 3.4).

A relatively high percentage of women in both groups were very aware of sexual harassment prior to receiving this questionnaire. Nearly three-fourths of the harassed women and over half of the nonharassed women knew of other women who had been sexually harassed at work or in the classroom. Over half of the women in the total sample felt that such harassment was a problem for these women.

Definition

It is ironic that although sexual harassment can be defined as a social problem, a clear-cut and standard definition of the behavior has not been agreed upon. In this section data from two questions on definition of sexual harassment will be presented. One question asked respondents to define harassment in their own terms. The other question included a list of behaviors. The respondents were asked to choose the behaviors which they felt constituted sexual harassment. There were two purposes in asking questions on definition of harassment. The first purpose was to discover how women define harassment. The second purpose was to see how their definitions of harassment compare with the definitions in the literature.

Definitions in the Literature

Let us first look at three major texts on sexual harassment and their definitions of harassment of working women. In The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women (Backhouse and Cohen, 1978), sexual harassment is defined as "a range of behaviors" and provide a series of behaviors that could be considered as sexual harassment. They develop a continuum with psychological harassment at one end and physical harassment at the other. Psychological sexual harassment in its milder forms may include "verbal innuendos or inappropriate affectionate gestures or continued requests for dates." The more severe physical harassment may include "pinching, hugging, brushing against the woman's body, rape or attempted rape" (Backhouse and Cohen, 1978:38). The authors also state in their definition of sexual harassment that it is coercive sexuality and may involve threats or reprisals for noncompliance.

In the work of MacKinnon, Sexual Harassment of Working Women (1979), the author writes from a judicial standpoint and builds a strong case for sexual harassment as sex discrimination. Her definition of sexual harassment is "the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power." She writes that sexual harassment may extend on a continuum of "severity and unwantedness" from verbal jokes aimed at a woman to forced sexual relations (MacKinnon, 1979:1).

In the first book published on harassment, Sexual

Shakedown, author Lin Farley defined sexual harassment as "unsolicited, nonreciprocal male behavior that asserts a woman's sex role over her function as a worker." This work also presents a continuum of behaviors which could be considered sexual harassment. Farley states that sexual harassment in its more serious forms may be considered sexual coercion while it may also be considered an annoyance in its milder forms. Regardless of what form the harassment takes, the author views harassment as "an act of aggression at any stage of its expression and in all its forms it contributes to the ultimate goal of keeping women subordinate at work" (Farley, 1978:15).

Further definitions of harassment have been developed by two organizations which deal specifically with sexual harassment of working women. These organizations have working definitions used to evaluate harassment for possible legal action and with which to educate the general public. The Alliance Against Sexual Coercion in Cambridge, Massachusetts, defines sexual harassment as "any sexually oriented practice that endangers a woman's job -- that undermines her job performance and threatens her economic livelihood" (Backhouse & Cohen, 1978:38). The New York-based Working Women United Institute defines harassment as "any repeated and unwanted sexual advances, looks, jokes, innuendos from someone in the workplace which make you uncomfortable and/or causes you problems on your job" (Working Women United pamphlet, 1975).

Most of these definitions of sexual harassment of working women agree that harassment does include a range or continuum of behaviors, both physical and verbal, overt and subtle, severe and mild. However, there appears to be a lack of agreement in the literature about what specific behaviors should be considered as sexual harassment and why. While one author would consider sexual jokes as harassment (MacKinnon, 1979), other authors would not (Backhouse & Cohen, 1978). During the pretest of the survey instrument several of the respondents disagreed about the types of behavior that could be considered harassment. One respondent remarked that ogling and leering were not harassment. She felt such behaviors were too mild in nature and too subjective to define. Several respondents felt that rape was so severe it belonged in a separate category.

There is strong agreement in the literature that sexual harassment does not involve the dynamics of sexual eroticism between men and women. Instead, sexual harassment involves the dynamics of power. It involves a situation where a man uses his power and influence to coerce a woman sexually. Several researchers have drawn an analogy between rape and sexual harassment. Both behaviors are defined as acts of sexual aggression; rape is much more violent and severe whereas sexual harassment can be very subtle in its manifestations (Martin & Fein, 1978:2).

There is also agreement in the literature that sexual harassment is often linked to reprisals if the woman refuses

to submit to her harasser's demands. Such reprisals include demotions, transfers, unsatisfactory job evaluations, denial of raises or firings (Farley, 1978:22).

Most definitions of harassment state that harassment is unwanted and unreciprocated by the harassed woman. There is a distinct difference between the sexual interactions between two consenting adults and the coercive sexuality in which a woman does not consent to or reciprocate the sexual behavior of the male. If a woman freely chooses to become involved sexually with a man in the work setting, this would not be considered sexual harassment.

Only a few definitions of sexual harassment in the literature include a reference to repeated harassment. The Working Women United Institute (WWUI) feels that repetition of the harassment is a very important aspect in any definition of harassment of working women. It is possible that a man may approach a woman in the workplace and initiate comments or affectionate gestures in an attempt to see if there is any mutual interest, to test the waters. If the woman expresses no interest or requests that the man desist and he does so, the WWUI would not consider this an incident of sexual harassment. If the man continued to make advances after being told to stop, the WWUI would consider that sexual harassment had occurred (Working Women United pamphlet, 1975). However, this is a very subjective area in defining sexual harassment. It is an attempt to comprehend the motives of men who initiate sexual advances in the workplace. There is

no research available which analyzes sexual harassment from the male point of view. What research that does exist defines the harasser's motivations from the point of view of the harassed woman. Since harassment can be very subtle and implicit in nature, it may be difficult for a woman to determine the motives of the man making sexual advances toward her. A woman may find a first-time advance threatening and undesirable and may feel that she has been harassed. She has a right to her feelings but she may be wrong about the man's motives. There is no doubt that a woman can experience a single incident as sexual harassment. However, repetition may be an important factor in social judgment of sexual harassment. Also, regarding the judicial definition of harassment, the courts often look for a pattern of harassment, a series of repeated harassments which were unwanted and unreciprocated.

Research Definition of Sexual Harassment

This researcher formulated a research definition of sexual harassment of working women after a review of current literature. The research definition of sexual harassment is: "Any repeated and unwanted sexual comments, looks, suggestions or physical contact that you find objectionable or offensive and causes you discomfort on the job or in the classroom." This definition includes several points that are included in other definitions of harassment. The harassment must be unwanted and repeated. It can be either verbal or physical.

It can be subtle as well as blatant. Also the definition includes the fact that harassment causes women difficulty on the job or in the classroom.

Subjective Definition of Sexual Harassment

Two questions were included to gather data on definition of sexual harassment. Each question will be discussed separately. One question on definition asked: "How would you define sexual harassment?" This question allowed the respondents to develop their own definitions of harassment. It did not force the respondents to choose from a list of behaviors or to relate their own experiences. The responses were separated into two groups: harassed and non-harassed. As each protocol was read by the researcher, words and phrases that seemed to define sexual harassment for that respondent were pulled out. During this process patterns of defining harassment appeared. After all the protocols were reviewed, eight categories of definition of sexual harassment were developed. This process of reviewing the protocols and developing categories for the two groups was repeated with similar results. This repetition allowed for increased validity within the limits of review by a single person.

Below is a list of the eight categories; following that is a discussion of each category separately. The eight categories are:

1. Sexual harassment is coercive and threatening in nature and is used as a way for men

to maintain power over women.

2. Sexual harassment can be both physical and verbal in nature.
3. Sexual harassment is unwanted and unreciprocated.
4. Sexual harassment can be blatant or subtle, implicit or explicit.
5. Sexual harassment is repeated and continuous.
6. Sexual harassment is viewing women only as sexual objects.
7. Sexual harassment is a negatively defined act and is defined as such with the following adjectives: offensive, demeaning, abusive, disparaging, and undesirable.
8. Miscellaneous

Category one defines sexual harassment as coercive, involving the use of power. One respondent defined harassment as "When a person of the opposite sex forces himself either physically or mentally in order to accomplish selfish goals." Another described it as "Using a position of power to suggest that pay increases or promotions are subject to sexual favors or performance." One woman defined harassment as "Use by male superior of power of his position to get sexual favors from female subordinates by use of threat of some aspect of job security," while another woman stated that harassment of women is "to influence them to do something for another person under the threat of dire results

if they don't comply." The dominant theme in these definitions of sexual harassment is the coercive and threatening nature of harassment. Harassment is the use of a man's superior position and power to force his demands on a woman.

Category two states that sexual harassment can be physical or verbal. Respondents emphasized that harassment was not just physical contact but could also include verbal comments and threats. One woman stated: "Harassment is verbal or physical conduct with a sexual connotation in the presence of someone who does not desire it." Another woman defined harassment as "any physical or verbal communication or activities with a sexual nature or implication."

The responses in category three define harassment as unwanted and unreciprocated. One woman defined harassment as "unwanted advances toward a person" while another woman stated harassment was "unwanted sexual advances." Another woman stated that sexual harassment was "unwanted sexual demands."

Category four defines harassment as being blatant or subtle, implicit as well as explicit. This definition of sexual harassment is different from category two. Definitions in category four state that harassment, either physical or verbal, can be blatant or subtle. For example, physical harassment can be very blatant such as attempted rape or it can be very subtle such as brushing up against a woman's breasts. Verbal harassment can be very explicit, including requests for dates accompanied by reminders of each person's

status in the workplace may be examples of more subtle forms of sexual harassment. Several women provided lengthy definitions of sexual harassment that fit this category.

One woman defined harassment as follows:

Some general comments. Most of this questionnaire deals with the physical side of sexual harassment. Many times sexual harassment can be very subtle and attacks the minds (brain) of women. Men can classify the woman as someone who should not be in the work force but home taking care of the kids. With that mentality you are treated as a second class citizen and not given the respect in a position that if held by a man he would have. You are classified as a dumb broad or whatever before you open your mouth. When you attend meetings and you are the only woman you are expected to make the coffee and take the minutes. Another example is in our office we have training programs for the staff. One such course was on preventing rape/self defense. You hear jokes about wanting equal time about not stopping rape. It makes you stop and think about what these people think. I strongly believe in these subtle attacks that happen all the time. Being physically or mentally abused by anyone with no provocation.

Another woman defined harassment by stating:

That's tricky. Harassment I think means 'hounding' someone, or blatantly and overtly creating situations or making propositions which are meant to put women in inferior roles. There is also covert, indirect 'pressure' as distinct from 'harassment,' which is equally effective and insidious.

One woman described harassment as "Any action words, or behavior which can be explicit or implicit that addresses the sexuality of a person. It can be subtle or severe."

Category five defines harassment as repeated and continuous. For example, one woman defined it as "Continuous, persistent attempts to establish a sexual relationship."

Another pointed out that "A subtle attempt to 'check out the water' which is rebuffed does not qualify as sexual harassment,

unless it happens more than once." Still another woman defined harassment as "Any persistent request for sexual favors." These definitions all focus on the repetitiveness of the harassment.

Category six defines sexual harassment as men viewing women only as sexual objects. One woman described it as "Treatment of women by men which is solely related to her femaleness and includes all the behaviors in question four." Another stated: "Any form of communication, verbal or non-verbal, which designates a female as a female rather than an employee, acquaintance or even friend." Here the main thrust is that harassment represents a woman being defined by her sex rather than her function as a worker.

Category seven defines sexual harassment with the use of negative adjectives. The emphasis is not on the process or content of the harassment; it is on how the harassment affects women. For example, one woman stated: "Sexual harassment is demeaning and disparaging to women." Other women described harassment as "derogatory and demeaning treatment of women" and "torment and trouble directed at women."

Category eight is a "catch all" category. These definitions do not fit into any of the other categories. They represent a broad variation in definition. Some of these definitions stated that harassment as "poor manners" or "degrading to one's social standing." One woman defined harassment as "Being excluded from information in the office

just because you are a girl." Another felt it was "Having to do the boss's work while he takes all the credit and the money." One woman felt harassment was "Something some women ask for by the way they dress and the way they act around men." Also, one woman stated: "It is something that can happen between homosexuals, women as well as men." Responses in category eight represent the only response offered by the respondent to this question on definition of harassment.

In addition, there were two other responses to this question which do not fit in any of the eight previously discussed categories. One response was to agree with the research definition which was found in question five. This definition stated that harassment is "Any repeated and unwanted sexual comments, looks, suggestions or physical contact that you find objectionable or offensive and causes you discomfort on the job or in the classroom." The survey instrument was designed in such a manner as to reduce the possibility that respondents would be influenced by the researcher's definition. Question three, the question on definition of harassment, was placed on the first page of the survey in the hope that respondents would not look ahead and be influenced by the researcher's definition of harassment on page two. However, nine respondents did look ahead and chose the research definition of sexual harassment as their own. In addition, 9.17 percent of the total sample did not respond to the question asking for a definition of sexual harassment.

Some of the women provided more than one definition of sexual harassment. If there was more than one definition, each definition was included. Therefore, Table 3.5 represents multiple responses.

Comparisons of Definitions of Sexual
Harassment by Harassed and
Nonharassed Women

Table 3.5 presents the responses in the categories that were developed from question three. The table shows multiple responses due to the fact that some respondents defined sexual harassment in more than one way. The most noticeable differences between the responses of the harassed and nonharassed women are in categories one and two. Over 42 percent of the harassed women defined sexual harassment as coercive, threatening, and as the use of male power to force demands on subordinate women in the workplace. Only 24.77 percent of the nonharassed women defined sexual harassment in this manner. Regarding category two, over 60 percent of the harassed women defined harassment as being both physical and verbal in nature, while only 25.69 percent of the nonharassed women defined harassment this way. The definitions of sexual harassment in categories one and two were offered more often by both groups than any other definitions. Nearly 40 percent of the total sample defined harassment as coercive and the use of power while over 46 percent defined harassment as being physical and verbal.

Category three defines harassment as unwanted and

TABLE 3.5

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT
 FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION THREE^a BY SEXUALLY
 HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN^b

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sexual harassment is coercive and threatening in nature and is used as a way for men to maintain power over women	16	42.11	27	24.77	43	39.45
Sexual harassment can be both physical or verbal in nature	23	60.53	28	25.69	51	46.79
Sexual harassment is unwanted and unsolicited	5	13.16	21	19.27	26	23.85
Sexual harassment can be both blatant or subtle; explicit as well as implicit	5	13.16	8	7.34	13	11.93
Sexual harassment is men viewing women only as sexual objects	3	7.89	5	4.59	8	7.34
Sexual harassment is repeated and continuous	2	5.26	5	4.59	7	6.42
Sexual harassment is a negatively defined act	7	18.42	17	15.60	24	22.02
Miscellaneous	5	13.16	7	6.42	12	11.01

^a"How would you define sexual harassment?"

^bTable reflects multiple responses.

unsolicited. More nonharassed women defined harassment in this way; 19.27 percent as compared with 13.16 percent of the harassed women. Nearly one-fourth of the total sample defined sexual harassment in this manner.

Almost twice as many harassed women defined sexual harassment as being blatant as well as subtle; 13.16 percent as compared to 7.34 percent. A similar situation exists with respect to category eight. Over 13 percent of the harassed women's definitions of harassment were placed in the miscellaneous category as compared to 6.42 percent for the nonharassed women. Over 22 percent of the total sample defined harassment by using negatively valued adjectives such as disparaging and demeaning.

Categories six and seven had the lowest number of responses for both groups. Only 7.34 percent of the total sample defined harassment as men viewing women only as sexual objects. Only 6.42 percent of the sample defined sexual harassment as being repeated and continuous.

To summarize, sexual harassment was defined in similar ways by both groups of women. The largest numbers of women in both groups defined sexual harassment as being coercive and manifesting itself verbally as well as physically. To a lesser extent women in both groups defined harassment as unwanted and unsolicited, and they defined harassment by the use of negatively valued adjectives. Few women in either group defined it as continuous or as women being viewed only as sexual objects by men. There are

differences between the two groups in the frequencies of response. Over twice as many sexually harassed women defined harassment as physical as well as verbal. Over 42 percent defined it as coercive as compared to 24.77 percent of the nonharassed women.

Behavioral Definition of Sexual Harassment

Another question asked, "Which of the following behaviors would you consider to be sexual harassment?" (Check as many categories as apply). The following behaviors were listed:

1. Ogling
2. Leering
3. Suggestive sexual remarks
4. Unwanted physical contact
5. Unsolicited invitations to have sex
6. Sexual jokes aimed at you
7. Attempted rape
8. Demands for sex in return for special favors

Overall there is a high rate of response to all the behaviors for both groups of women; that is, most are included in the definition of sexual harassment by most women (Table 3.6). The lowest frequency of response is for the behavior of ogling. Over 47 percent of the harassed women felt this was a form of sexual harassment as compared with over 60 percent of the nonharassed women. The behavior of leering also received a lower number of responses than other

TABLE 3.6

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT
 FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION FOUR^a BY SEXUALLY
 HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN^b

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Oogling	18	47.37	43	60.56	61	55.96
Leering	27	71.05	48	67.61	75	68.81
Suggestive sexual remarks	33	86.84	61	85.92	94	86.24
Unwanted physical contact	38	100.00	70	98.59	108	99.08
Unsolicited invitations to have sex	37	97.37	69	97.18	106	97.24
Sexual jokes aimed at you	33	86.84	62	87.32	95	87.16
Attempted rape	35	92.11	57	80.28	92	84.40
Demands for sex in return for special favors	37	97.37	69	97.18	106	97.25

^a"Which of the following behaviors would you consider to be sexual harassment? (Check as many categories as apply.)"

^bTable reflects multiple responses.

behaviors; 71.05 percent of the harassed group felt leering was harassment as compared to 67.61 percent of the nonharassed group. The two groups responded differently to the behavior of attempted rape. Over 92 percent of the harassed women felt that attempted rape was harassment while only 80.28 percent of the nonharassed women felt it was harassment (Table 3.6).

A relatively large number of women in both groups felt that except for ogling and leering all the other behaviors were a form of sexual harassment. Over 97 percent of the total sample felt that unwanted physical contact, unsolicited invitations to have sex, and demands for sex in return for special favors were all forms of harassment.

Summary

A relatively large number of the respondents, nearly 75 percent, were very aware of sexual harassment of working women prior to receiving the survey instrument. Many of the respondents reported knowing other women who had been sexually harassed; 73 percent of the harassed women and 53 percent of the nonharassed women. Over half of the respondents stated that they felt the harassment was a problem for these women.

When women defined sexual harassment in their own words, both harassed and nonharassed women defined harassment as coercive, both physical and verbal in its manifestations, unwanted and unsolicited, and as having negative

effects on women. Harassed women defined sexual harassment as coercive and as being physical and verbal in nature more often than nonharassed women.

When respondents chose behaviors they felt were harassment, women in both groups felt all behaviors listed except ogling and leering were sexual harassment. Even the subtle behaviors of ogling and leering were considered harassment by many women; over 55 percent felt ogling was harassment and over 68 percent felt leering constituted sexual harassment.

A comparison of the subjective definitions and the behavioral definitions shows agreement among women in defining sexual harassment. Women in both groups defined harassment as coercive, physical and verbal, unwanted and as having negative effects on harassed women (Table 3.5). A large percentage of the women found all the behaviors listed except ogling and leering to be harassment (Table 3.6). In both questions women, whether harassed or not harassed, tended to define sexual harassment of working women as unwanted physical contact or verbal comments which involve some type of coercion or threat.

In Chapter Four the act of sexual harassment will be discussed as a process. Questions were included on the act of harassment itself, how the harassed women dealt with the harassment, the consequences of her actions, and what she felt motivated her harasser.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROCESS OF HARASSMENT

This chapter analyzes the process of sexual harassment from the point of view of the harassed woman. The ⁽¹²⁾ experience of sexual harassment involves more than the physical or verbal act of harassment. It includes the harassing behavior as well as the woman's feelings about the harassment, her response, and the consequences. § It may also include an attempt by the harassed woman to understand what motivated her harasser.

A number of open-ended questions solicited the respondent's description of the process of sexual harassment. Sexually harassed women were asked to describe their own perceptions and feelings about harassment. The qualitative analysis of the data from these questions was divided into five components as follows:

1. Type of sexual harassment, whether it was physical or verbal.
2. Motivation of the harasser from the point of view of the harassed woman.
3. Feelings about being sexually harassed.
4. Response to the sexual harassment.
5. Consequences.

Reading each protocol, the researcher pulled out words and phrases from questions about each one of the five components. Patterns emerged from this review of the data which are presented and discussed below.

The Type of Sexual Harassment

In one question the respondents were asked to describe the nature of their harassment, including whether it was physical or verbal. Over 44 percent of the harassed women reported only verbal harassment, no physical harassment. The verbal harassment varied in severity. One of the verbally harassed women stated that she and six classmates joined their professor at a restaurant for coffee after an evening class. In front of the other classmates the professor turned to her and announced, "I'm sterile, would you like to go out?" Another woman stated that her boss continually called her "honey, sweetie and dear." She said that she found these labels objectionable because "they tended to undermine her credibility." One woman reported that her boss asked her to have "sexual relations with him and when she refused "he made threats directed at my job security." Another harassed woman stated that a faculty member "asked me to come and sit on his lap while he dictated a letter" and that the remark was made in the office in front of other people.

In many cases harassment that begins as only verbal continues and often escalates to physical harassment or

verbal threats for noncompliance. More women were verbally harassed than physically harassed or verbally and physically harassed.

Nearly 24 percent of the harassed women reported only physical harassment, with no verbal interaction. One woman related her harassment as follows: "This was a physical form of sexual harassment. My boss and I were in the office of a grocery store I used to work at and he just reached over and grabbed both of my breasts." Another woman stated that: "A male faculty member put his hand on my bottom as I was bending over to drink at a water fountain." One woman said, "A male faculty member swatted me on the buttocks in the reception area of my office while I was discussing business with another person." A fourth woman described her harassment as follows: "I was bartending. When I brought the drinks to the table of two men and two women, one of the men leaned over as if to pick up something and bit me on my rear end."

Only one woman reported that her physical harassment continued beyond the initial incident. She stated: "On one occasion my employer touched my breasts and on another my pubic area. He would come out of the toilet without zipping his pants and then zip them up in front of me. This took place in the office storage area behind the shop. I was seventeen years old at the time." It appears that when physical harassment occurs without any verbal interaction the incidents tend to be brief and usually one time only.

Nearly 32 percent of the harassed women reported both physical and verbal harassment. All but one of these women reported that the harassment was repeated over time. Several of the victims reported that the harassment escalated in severity from verbal to physical. One woman remarked, "It started as verbal with questions like 'What do you think of extramarital sex?', and ended up as physical. It took place in the office." Another woman stated her harassment was "Verbal remarks leading to physical contact, in the workplace, in other words I, well--was advanced upon and ended having an affair with my supervisor." One victim of harassment stated: "I was on the phone asking a man to do something work-related for me, and he made numerous suggestive remarks (verbal in this instance, physical in others from the same harasser)."

It appears harassment can take many forms. It can (13)
be verbal or physical or both. It may happen only once or
it may be repeated over time. It may be mild or severe; it
may also escalate in severity over time, especially if the
woman refuses to cooperate. Harassment that is only
physical tends to occur one time only while verbal harassment
or harassment that is both verbal and physical tends to be
repeated. Z

This is an interesting finding. Further research might explore whether this is a common pattern or unique to this study. In addition, future research should seek reasons for the greater tendency toward verbal harassment

instead of physical harassment or a combination of the two types of harassment.

Motivation

Another question asked the women to express what they felt motivated their harassers to harass them. From the patterned responses to this question the researcher developed four categories which define the motivation of the harasser.

The harassed women attributed various motivations to the harassing male; according to the victims, men are motivated to harass women for the following reasons:

1. Because of a general social/cultural view of women by men.
2. Because of psychological reasons exhibited by the harassers.
3. Because of the victim's own vulnerability: being young, single and naive.
4. Because of the victim's physical attractiveness.

Each of these categories will be discussed below. Table 4.1 presents the frequency of response to each category and shows multiple responses as some women reported more than one motive for their harassment.

Category one contains responses which were more generalized. The women stated that the motivation to harass women came from the general social view that men have toward

TABLE 4.1
 MOTIVATION FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT^a
 FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE^b TO CATEGORIES ON MOTIVATION BY
 SEXUALLY HARASSED WOMEN

	N	%
Because of a general social/ cultural view of women by men	12	31.58
Because of psychological reasons exhibited by the harassers	11	28.95
Because of the Victim's own vulnerability; being young, single and naive	5	13.16
Because of the victim's physical attractiveness	6	15.79
Did not know why	8	21.05

^aWhat do you feel motivated your sexual harasser to harass you?"

^bRepresents multiple responses.

women. The responses did not focus on the individual harasser; instead the focus was on how men relate in general to women. Many of the responses included comments on how some men tend to use their positions of power to force sexual demands on women. One woman said the motivation for harassment was "The need to feel power through intimidation" and connected this need to "an insecure male ego." Another harassed woman stated that harassment is "A man's outlet for feeling intimidated, threatened, and insecure. It is the lowest form of an insult a man can give a woman in the work or classroom setting." One woman simply replied that the motivation behind sexual harassment is "cultural dictates." The responses in this category define the motivation behind sexual harassment in cultural and social terms with an emphasis on the general social interactions between men and women.

In category two the women stated that the motivation for harassment involved the psychological makeup of their particular harasser. They did not generalize to all men but focused on their harassment and their harasser. One woman said, "Middle-age crisis was probably the root of the problem, he had a lousy marriage--I feel he did this to get back at her." Another woman said, "He is in my opinion not a stable person," while another stated, "He is newly divorced--must have thought it a way to attract females."

These women all say their harassers were motivated to harass them because of his emotional difficulties or

psychological problems. The women place the blame on their harasser and do not generalize to all men as did the women in category one.

The responses in category three state that the vulnerability of the woman was the reason for the harassment. These women did not blame themselves but felt their harassers took advantage of their vulnerable conditions: being young, single, and naive. One woman stated: "Because I look younger than I am, this person attempted to play on my naivete." Another said, "Because I was young, he thought he could get away with it."

Like category three, category four points to the characteristics of the harassed women as motivation for harassment. However, in category four the motivation for harassment is attributed to the physical attractiveness of the women. One woman commented, "My harasser was attracted to me," while another woman said, "He stated that he had always liked my body." A third woman remarked, "I've always been told I have a good figure."

Weiner's research in attribution theory can be applied to this analysis of the motivations for sexual harassment (Weiner, 1972). When individuals attribute causality they apply either external or internal causality. Internal causality refers to a person's abilities or qualities while external causality refers to environmental situations or circumstances. Causality may also be stable or unstable, a relatively permanent condition or a condition

subject to change (Weiner, 1972).

When this research is applied to the motivation for sexual harassment, category one contains responses where motivation is attributed to external and relatively stable causes. It is relatively stable because cultural perspectives do not change rapidly. In category two the motivation for harassment is attributed to internal causes but may be stable or unstable. The psychological reasons exhibited by the harasser may or may not change. A man may, for example, be going through a divorce and may display certain behaviors which are temporary or a man may be displaying certain psychological characteristics which are engrained in his personality and probably will not change to any degree over time.

Category three is external and unstable. It is external in that it does not reside in the harasser, and it is unstable in that the victim's vulnerability will change over time. Category four is also external and unstable. The victim's physical attractiveness will change.

Future research on sexual harassment should address the male perspective. Questions should be asked to explore the motivations for sexual harassment and how men attribute causality as compared to women.

In addition to the four categories discussed above, eight women stated that they did not know what motivated their harassers. Many of these women also commented that they had in no way encouraged their harassers. One woman

remarked, "I have no idea. I had never even talked to the instructor before, even about assignments or anything."

Over 59 percent of the women felt the source of the motivation came from the harassers and not from the women. They did not believe they had encouraged or promoted the harassment. They did not blame themselves for the harassment. Nearly one-third of the harassed women felt their harassers were threatened by having to deal with women in the workplace. Such men were motivated to harass women because of their need to maintain their power and dominance over women. As one woman remarked, "Men are motivated to sexually harass women because of their ego and jealousy; difficulty working with a woman on the same level."

When women responded that they felt they had motivated the sexual harassment because of their youthfulness or their being single or divorced, they did not blame themselves for the harassment. They still blamed their harasser. None of the women stated that they felt they had acted in any way to encourage their harassers. It appears that the majority of the sexually harassed women do not feel they motivated their harassers. At least one-third believed the motivation for harassment was the need for some men who feel threatened by women in the work force to maintain their power. The concept of "blaming the victim" does not arise in any analysis of the responses to the question on motivation (Ryan, 1971). These harassed women do not blame themselves for their harassment but instead in many cases blamed the harasser and

his need to maintain power and dominance over women in the workplace. The implications of power and status on the process of harassment will be discussed in Chapter V.

Feelings About Harassment

One question asked the sexually harassed women to describe their feelings about their harassment. The feelings described were grouped into six categories as follows:

1. Angry
2. Embarrassed
3. Powerless
4. Demeaned
5. Frightened
6. Shocked

These categories represent the six response patterns which define how harassed women felt about their harassment. Each category will be discussed separately below.

Category one represents responses from women who felt angry about being harassed. These women used such words as "furious," "disgusted," and "irritated." One woman said, "I became angry and resentful--angry because I don't like being treated as a sex object instead of a person and resentful because I always try to be a professional on the job and would like to be treated that way." Another woman stated that her anger "Produced aggressive behavior on my part to meet his aggression in order to get him the message to STOP." Yet another woman stated, "I resented it and

fully despise the person for it."

Category two has responses that represent the powerlessness felt by harassed women. Most of these women described a feeling of powerlessness and frustration, of not knowing what to do. One woman stated, "I guess I was too naive to see what was happening until the chips were down and then I didn't know what to do." Another said, "I was frustrated that it could not be accepted that I could do the job just as well as the males."

The expressions of powerlessness and frustration represent two different situations. In the first situation the harassed woman felt helpless because she didn't know how to stop the harassment. In the second the harassed woman felt she had to let it continue and/or ignore it because of the harasser's power over her. One woman said, "I didn't like it, but I tolerated it because he was my advisor and I needed his help and guidance."

In category three the responses are from women who felt embarrassed about the harassment. One woman remarked, "I was humiliated," while another said, "I was most embarrassed."

Category four represents the responses from women who were shocked at being sexually harassed. These women found it a total surprise and an unexpected event, almost like "this can't be happening to me." One woman who was verbally and physically harassed by one of her boss's clients stated: "I was shocked by the attack." Another

woman said she was "Appalled that anyone would behave in such an unprofessional manner, especially in a business office."

Responses in category five represent the reactions of women who felt demeaned or demoralized by the harassment. They used such words as "cheapened," "insulted," and "put down" to describe how they felt about their harassment. One woman felt she was "demoralized and cheapened." Another woman stated the harassment was "demeaning and demoralizing."

Category six contains responses from women who were frightened at being harassed. One woman stated, "I was frightened and upset." Another woman who was physically harassed by her boss said, "It frightened me that he would make it difficult for me at work and that the harassment would continue."

Table 4.2 presents a frequency distribution of the responses to question twelve. Many of the women expressed more than one feeling about their harassment so each of the categories contain multiple responses. Almost 53 percent of the women reported feeling angry about being sexually harassed. It appears that if women felt only one emotion about their harassment, it was anger. Over 31 percent of the women stated that they felt only anger over their harassment. The categories of powerless, embarrassed, shocked and demeaned have similar frequencies of response. The emotion of fear was the least reported emotion. Only 10.50 percent of the women stated that they were frightened

TABLE 4.2
 FEELINGS ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT^a
 FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO CATEGORIES ON
 FEELINGS ABOUT HARASSMENT^b BY HARASSED WOMEN

	N	%
Angry	20	52.63
Embarrassed	7	18.42
Powerless	8	21.05
Demeaned	6	15.79
Frightened	4	10.53
Shocked	7	18.42

^aDescribe your personal feelings about the sexual harassment."

^bRepresents Multiple Responses.

by their harassment.

The two most common combinations were anger and embarrassment and anger and powerlessness. Several women stated they were initially angry over the harassment and then felt powerless to stop further harassment. Other women commented that they were initially embarrassed over being harassed and then became angry after thinking about the situation.

One question on feelings asked, "Do you feel your sexual harassment was a problem for you?" There were four responses from which the women could choose: "No," "Yes, but not a significant problem," "Yes, and it was a serious problem," and "Uncertain." Over 42 percent of the women stated that the harassment was not a problem for them. Nearly 40 percent said their harassment was a problem, but not a significant one. Only 15.79 percent felt their harassment was a serious problem for them.

Many women felt it was not a problem or at least not a serious problem for them. These women took active steps to stop their harassers or they successfully avoided their harassers. In both cases the harassment often ceased.

Handling the Harassment

Respondents were asked how they handled their harassment by both open-ended and structured questions. The latter question lists twenty different methods for dealing with sexual harassment and asks respondents to check as many as apply to their situation.

The responses to the open-ended question were reviewed by the researcher. Words and phrases that explained how women handled their harassment were grouped together. The researcher developed six categories which represent ways of handling sexual harassment for these women. These six categories are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Active
Responses to
Harassment | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confront the harasser, either verbally or physically 2. Report the harasser to a superior or outside agency. |
| <hr/> | |
| Passive
Responses to
Harassment | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ignore the harasser. 4. Avoid the harasser. 5. Submit to the harasser. 6. Quit their jobs. |

In category one the responses from women who confronted their harassers either verbally or physically vary in intensity. One woman stated that she was "Up front: I confronted the harasser each and every time it happened no matter where we were--meetings, conferences, etc." Another woman who was slapped on her behind said, "I elbowed him in the stomach before I even turned around."

The responses in category two are from women who chose to report their harassment, either to the harasser's superior or to an outside mediating agent such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the Personnel Department. One woman stated that she "Reported the harassment to the

harasser's superior and to the Personnel Department."

Another woman said, "I related the incident to my father, who in turn reported it to my boss's superior."

Category three contains responses from women who ignored the harassment. They did not submit or protest, but instead acted as if the harassment had not occurred. One woman who was verbally harassed said, "Unfortunately I did nothing." Another woman who was physically attacked by her boss said, "I ignored what was done. Looking back that was a passive response and I wish I would have been more assertive--perhaps coming back with some sort of remark."

In category four the responses are from women who avoided their harasser. Most of these women said that they tried to stay clear of the harasser. One woman remarked, "I stayed away from him--went to the other side of the building when he came in."

In category five the responses are from women who submitted to the harassment. One woman whose boss demanded a sexual affair said, "I had an affair with the man--I wish I knew enough then to call a halt to things and get things straightened out."

Category six contained responses from women who quit their jobs or a class to get away from their harasser. One woman who was physically harassed by her instructor said, "I struggled physically, but silently, with him. I believe I finished the class that night, but I never returned." Another woman simply stated, "I finally quit my

TABLE 4.3
HANDLING SEXUAL HARASSMENT^a
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO CATEGORIES ON
HANDLING HARASSMENT^b BY SEXUALLY HARASSED WOMEN

	N=38	%		N	%
Confront the harasser	13	34.21	Active response to harassment	18	47.37
Report the harasser	5	13.16			
Ignore the harassment	16	42.11	Passive response to harassment	30	78.95
Avoid the harasser	6	15.79			
Submit to the harassment	4	10.53			
Quit their jobs	4	10.53			

^a"How did you handle the sexual harassment?"

^bRepresents multiple responses.

job and moved."

The responses in categories one and two are active responses to harassment. The women actively confronted or reported their harasser. They dealt directly with the harassment. The responses in categories three through six are passive responses. They represent nonproblem-solving behaviors: passive acceptance, avoidance, submission and flight. These women did not actively deal with their harassment to bring about its termination.

Table 4.3 represents the frequency distribution of the responses to this question on how these women handled their sexual harassment. It includes multiple responses as several women handled their harassment in both an active and passive way. Nearly 79 percent of the harassed women handled their harassment in a passive way. They did not confront or report their harasser. Over 47 percent of the women reported they handled their harassment in an active way; they reported it or confronted their harasser.

Table 2 (in Appendix 2) presents a distribution of the responses to the structured question. Harassed women were asked to choose from a list of behaviors ones they utilized to handle their harassment. Fifty percent confided in a friend about their harassment and over 47 percent confided in a co-worker. Over 40 percent of the women stated they ignored the harassment while 23.68 percent tried to distract the harasser by changing the subject. Only 26.32 percent of the women demanded that the harassment stop.

Overall, data elicited by the two questions indicate that a greater number of women handled their harassment in a passive manner than in an active manner.

Blau's work on exchange theory can be applied to this analysis of how harassed women handle their harassment. His model of alternatives which can be utilized when equivalent service is not exchanged between two parties fits well with the alternatives chosen by these harassed women. In each case of sexual harassment the victim evaluates the behavior of her harasser. If she feels that his demands are excessive or his behavior unreasonable, she may feel exploited. She then can choose from several alternatives to attempt to balance the exchange. She can decide to seek "expert" assistance from an external agency. She may attempt to find ways of getting along without any exchange with the harasser. This could include avoidance, ignoring his harassment, seeking employment elsewhere, or discovering a way to get along without working. She also could submit to the demands of the harasser, thereby legitimizing his power and authority over her.

All of the above described behaviors are alternatives for the harassed woman. The availability of alternatives keeps the harassed woman from being totally dependent on her harasser. If the harasser eliminates these alternatives, he establishes his power and authority over the harassed woman.

Consequences

Included in the survey instrument were several questions on the consequences of handling the sexual harassment in the manner chosen. Question seventeen was both open-ended and structured. The open-ended question asked, "What were the consequences of handling the sexual harassment in the manner that you chose?" When the responses to this question were reviewed, no response patterns merged. Many respondents either did not answer this question or simply replied, "None." Approximately one-third of the respondents stated that the harassment ended.

The poor response rate on this question may be the result of the use of the word "consequences." This word may have had a negative value for some of the respondents. If nothing negative happened as a result of the way they handled their sexual harassment, they may have felt they had nothing to respond. A better wording of the question may have been, "What happened as a result of handling the sexual harassment in the manner that you chose?" This would have allowed respondents to relate both the negative and positive "consequences" in their own terms.

The second part of this question asked, "Did any of the following happen to you?" This was followed by a list of eleven possible consequences. Respondents were asked to check as many consequences as applied to them. The list of consequences is as follows:

1. Forced to transfer to another department.

2. Forced to quit your job.
3. Have the harassment end to your satisfaction.
4. Have the harasser transferred to another department.
5. Have the harasser fired.
6. Have the harassment continue.
7. Have the harassment continue and also worsen.
8. Have the harasser place negative performance evaluations in your file.
9. Have the harasser lower a grade in a course or on a paper.
10. Have the harasser ridicule you in front of co-workers and/or peers.
11. Other (please specify).

Table 3 (in Appendix 2) presents a distribution of the responses to this question. Nearly 40 percent of the women stated that the harassment ended to their satisfaction. Of the women in this group, over 53 percent had handled their harassment in an active manner. They had either reported it or they had confronted their harasser. Over 46 percent of the women who reported that their harassment ended to their satisfaction had handled it in a passive way. They had ignored it or they had avoided their harasser. An end to the harassment was brought about for these women by avoidance. However, several reported that the harasser began to harass other women in the workplace.

Nearly 24 percent of the women said the harassment

continued or even worsened. All the women in this group had handled their harassment in a passive manner. They did not confront or report the harasser. Other research on harassment has shown that when a woman does not take action to stop the harassment, it will in many cases continue and even escalate (Farley, 1978; Backhouse & Cohen, 1978).

Another question asked the respondents if they would handle their harassment in the same manner today. Nearly 40 percent of the women answered YES. The same percentage of women answered NO. Of the women who had answered NO, nearly 75 percent stated that they would now handle their harassment in an active manner. One woman said, "I would report him to the chairperson and file a formal complaint." Another woman stated she would "Confront the situation and bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. I have procedures that will back me--which was not the case then." Another remarked, "I doubt seriously if circumstances would be identical to the incident related. As I have matured I have become more assertive and outspoken. Today I would tell the individual that I felt that their actions were sexual harassment and that I would not stand for that kind of treatment. If it continued, I would initiate appropriate action through necessary channels. Somehow, I do not feel that I am susceptible to sexual harassment now due to my age and present assertiveness. I personally feel many men are intimidated by my aggressiveness, outspokenness and

assertiveness." Slightly more than 21 percent of the women said they were uncertain whether they would handle the harassment in the same way today. Most felt that each situation needed to be evaluated on its own merits and handled accordingly. (17)

It appears that in many cases if the harassment is not confronted and active measures are not taken to stop it, it will continue. It also appears that today harassed women are more aware of options in handling sexual harassment.

They realize that ignoring harassment will not make it go away. STOP

Summary

The process of sexual harassment is composed of five parts: the type of harassment, the motivation of the harasser, the feelings about being harassed, the response to the harassment, and the consequences. An analysis of the data from the questions on type of harassment revealed that sexual harassment takes many forms, both verbal and physical. It varies in severity, is often repeated, and may escalate in severity. More women reported verbal harassment than physical or a combination of verbal and physical. Harassment that was only physical tended to happen only once while verbal harassment or harassment that was both verbal and physical was often repeated. Verbal harassment often escalates to physical harassment or threats for non-compliance. All

Respondents attributed four difference motives to their harassers. According to the victims, men harass women for the following reasons: because of a general social/cultural view men have of women; because of psychological reasons exhibited by the men; because of the victim's vulnerability; and because of the victim's physical attractiveness. Over one-half of the harassed women attributed motivation for harassment to the harasser and not to themselves. Even when women stated the motivation for harassment was because of their vulnerability or physical appearance, they did not blame themselves. They blamed their harassers. The concept of "blaming the victim" does not arise. Over one-third of the harassed women felt the motivation for harassment was the need for some men to maintain their power because they are threatened by women in the workplace.

Women described five different feelings about being sexually harassed: angry, embarrassed, powerless, demeaned, frightened, and shocked. Over one-half of the women reported that they were angry about being sexually harassed. Nearly one-third of the women reported this as their only feeling about the experience. The two most common combinations of feelings were anger and powerlessness and embarrassment and anger.

Respondents handled their harassment in six different ways. Two of the ways were active responses to the harassment, confronting and reporting their harasser. The other four ways were passive responses to the harassment: ignore

the harasser, avoid the harasser, submit to the harassment, and quit their jobs. Nearly 79 percent of the harassed women handled their harassment in a passive manner. Over 47 percent of the women handled it in an active manner. These percentages do represent multiple responses as some respondents chose to handle their harassment in both an active and passive way.

When respondents answered a structured question on how they handled their sexual harassment, nearly one-half reported they handled it passively; they confided in a friend or co-worker or chose to ignore the harassment.

An analysis of the data from the questions on consequences revealed that if sexual harassment is not actively confronted it will, in many cases, continue and even escalate. Nearly 24 percent (N=9) of the women reported that their harassment continued and worsened. All these women reported handling their harassment in a passive manner; they did not confront or report their harasser.

CHAPTER V

POWER, STATUS, AND PERCEPTION OF FUTURE HARASSMENT

This chapter is a discussion of sexual harassment through a comparison of the harasser and the harassed woman. Age and job status of the victim and her harasser are compared. This data will be discussed in conjunction with the previous analysis of the victim's income and marital status at the time of harassment and the concept of vulnerability. An analysis of the harasser's power and status as compared to the victim's lack of power and status and her vulnerability may explain why some women are sexually harassed.

The second part of this chapter is a discussion of harassed and nonharassed women's perceptions of future harassment. Both groups of women were asked if they felt they would be sexually harassed in the future and if they felt women in general would be sexually harassed in the future. The respondents were asked to give reasons for their answers. The concept of locus of control was used to analyze their explanations.

Power and Status

Four questions were asked relative to the job status

of harasser and victim. It is important to note that some respondents, although now employed at the university, may have been employed at another work setting at the time of their harassment. Therefore, the respondents were asked to describe the workplace where the harassment occurred.

In over 84 percent of the cases of sexual harassment the victim stated that her harasser held a higher status job. These women also stated that they felt their harassers were in a position to exert their authority over them. In only 15.79 percent of the cases was the harasser of a similar or lower job status than the victim. In these cases the harasser was not in a position to exert her authority over the woman that he harassed. In all the cases where the harasser was in a higher status job position the woman also said that he was in a position of power and could exert his authority over her.

One half of the respondents reported that their harassment took place at the university. Of this nineteen women, 21 percent reported harassment by male co-workers with similar job status. Over 63 percent of the women harassed at the university were students, secretaries, or other C-line employees. They reported harassment by men with higher job status, faculty members or A-line administrators. The other 15.79 percent of the women at the university were B-line employees or faculty who reported being sexually harassed by A-line administrators or another faculty member of higher rank. Of the respondents reporting

harassment at the university, over 79 percent were harassed by a man in a superior job position. A-line employees include administration and faculty. B-line employees are managerial and professionals. C-line employees are clerical and support staff who are on an hourly wage.

One half of the respondents reported that their harassment took place in a work setting other than the university. Only 10.53 percent of these respondents were harassed by co-workers with similar or lower job status. Nearly 90 percent reported that they were harassed by a man in a job position superior to their own and also with authority over them. In all of these cases where the harasser held a higher status job the victims stated that they felt their harasser was in a position of authority over them. Over 68 percent of the women reporting harassment in work settings other than the university were students, secretaries, bookkeepers, and unskilled laborers. Only 31.58 percent of the women were white collar professionals. Table 5.1 presents a breakdown of the job status of the sexually harassed women at the university and other work settings.

Past research has suggested that women are sexually harassed by men in position of authority as well as by co-workers with little or no authority over the women they harass (Farley, 1978; Backhouse & Cohen, 1978). However, it appears from the results of this study that women are more often sexually harassed by men in higher status

TABLE 5.1

BREAKDOWN OF JOB STATUS OF SEXUALLY HARASSED WOMEN
AT THE UNIVERSITY AND OTHER WORK SETTINGS

University	N	%	Other Work Settings	N	%
Students, secretaries and faculty harassed by male coworkers	4	21.05	Professional women harassed by male coworkers	2	10.53
Faculty and B-line employees harassed by male superiors	3	15.79	Faculty members and professional women harassed by male superiors	4	21.05
Students, secretaries and other C-line employees harassed by male superiors	12	63.16	Students, secretaries bookkeepers and general laborers harassed by male superiors	13	68.42
Total	19	100.00		19	100.00

positions than by male co-workers. Over 84 percent of the women reporting harassment stated their harassers held jobs with higher status and were in a position to exert their authority over their victims.

Some researchers have stated that sexual harassment is not sexual in the erotic sense but represents an attempt by the harasser to maintain his power and status (Farley, 1978; Backhouse & Cohen, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979). If sexual harassment were based on an erotic sexual attraction only, one would expect to find a more even distribution between harassment by co-workers and harassment by males with higher job status. Instead this researcher found that the greatest number of cases of sexual harassment involved a male in a superior job position, a male who was in a position to exert his authority over the woman to achieve his demands. It is possible that the ultimate motivation for harassment could be sexual eroticism and not power. However, the use of sexual harassment as a way to maintain male power is emphasized in this analysis.

Collins' (1971) work on sexual stratification suggests that society is stratified sexually just as it is stratified economically and politically. Women are seen as subordinates. Sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace are based on this long-standing and deeply ingrained attitude. As more women enter the job market some men who have achieved power through their work may resent women in the workplace and their increasing power

and status. Such men may harass certain women in an attempt to maintain their power and their job status.

It is important to add that this area needs further research. Future research on sexual harassment should include the area of motivation for harassment from the male perspective. At this point all the research is from the victim's perspective and not the harasser's perspective.

Questions were asked on the numbers of males and females employed in the work setting where the harassment took place. Past research has found that token females are usually less powerful and more vulnerable in the workplace (Kanter, 1977). However, few respondents answered these questions or, in many cases, answered by stating that they could not remember the numbers. Therefore an analysis was not possible due to insufficient data.

Age

Several questions were asked on the age of the harasser and the age of the harassed woman. Table 5.2 presents the distribution of the ages of the harassers and the victims. Nearly 74 percent of the harassers were age 36 or older; the largest percentage, nearly 53 percent, were between the ages of 36 and 50. In contrast, nearly 90 percent of the harassed women were age 35 or under. When age was compared in a case-by-case basis, the harasser was older than the victim in over 81 percent of the cases. In over 15 percent of the cases the victims reported that

TABLE 5.2

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF VICTIM AND HARASSER
AT THE TIME OF HARASSMENT

	Victim		Harasser	
	N	%	N	%
Under 25	15	39.47	0	0.00
25 to 35	19	50.00	10	26.32
36 to 50	4	10.53	20	52.63
Over 50	0	0.00	8	21.05
Total	38	100.00	38	100.00

their harassers were approximately their own age. In only 2.63 percent of the cases was the victim older than her harasser.

It appears that harassment more often involves men over the age of 35. None of the women reported harassment by a man aged 25 or younger. It also appears that men tend to harass younger women, age 35 or younger, and not women their own age. Only 10.53 percent of the victims were age 36 to 50 and none of the victims were over the age of 50.

It is interesting to speculate why there is a predominance of older men harassing younger women. Assuming a power explanation, it may be that older men who have worked longer and are in more powerful job positions may feel more threatened at the prospect of younger women entering the work force. They may have had less experience in dealing with women in the work force. Younger men may not feel as threatened by women in the workplace. Further research on sexual harassment should explore more thoroughly the age differences between the harasser and the victim and their implications. It is important to note that these results are also compatible with an erotic explanation of harassment. Sexuality in our society is often defined in terms of older men seeking younger women. However, again this research emphasizes the power explanation of sexual harassment of working women.

The above comments focus on the power needs of the older male. The vulnerability of the younger female can

also be stressed. As discussed in Chapter II, many of the harassed women were young, single or divorced, and had a relatively low income compared to their harasser at the time of harassment. They were vulnerable financially and emotionally. If a typical harassment case can be constructed from the data resulting from this survey, the victim would be divorced or never married, under the age of 35, earning less than \$15,000 per year, and working in a low status job or enrolled as a student. The harasser would be over the age of 36 and employed in a high status job with direct authority over his victim. Although the analysis is limited it appears that younger, single women are harassed by older men whose job title gives them some degree of authority over the women they choose to harass.

Perceptions of Future Harassment

The survey instrument contained two questions on respondent perception of possible future harassment, of themselves and of women in general. Both questions had two parts, one structured and the other open-ended, asking respondents for an explanation of their answers.

Perceptions of Future Harassment of Self

One question asked, "Do you expect that you personally will be sexually harassed at work or in the classroom in the future?" Respondents could answer 'No', 'Yes', or 'Uncertain'. Table 5.3 presents the frequency of response to the structured part of the question for both harassed

TABLE 5.3

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION FORTY^a
 BY SEXUALLY HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women	
	N	%	N	%
No	17	44.74	49	72.06
Uncertain	7	18.42	15	22.06
Yes	14	36.84	4	5.88
Total	38	100.00	38	100.00

^a"Do you expect that you personally will be sexually harassed at work or in the classroom in the future?"

and nonharassed women. Over 36 percent of the harassed women stated that they felt they would be sexually harassed in the future as compared with only 5.88 percent of the nonharassed women. This is not too surprising; once a person has experienced a particular event they are more likely to feel that it may happen to them again. One woman who stated that she felt she could be harassed in the future added, "I think our expectations are determined by past events."

Over 72 percent of the nonharassed women stated that they felt they would not be harassed in the future as compared to 44.74 percent of the harassed women. It appears that the reverse holds true; if one has not encountered a particular event one may be less likely to feel that it will happen to them. One woman remarked, "Since I never have been I don't expect to be. Most women feel it won't happen to me."

The second part of the question asked, "Please explain why you answered Question forty as you did." The responses were separated into two group: harassed and nonharassed. Then the responses were grouped according to whether respondents expressed an external or internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

When an individual expresses an external locus of control he or she believes that an event happens or will happen as a result of chance, fate, luck, or the influence or power of other people. These individuals would also not

predict the outcome of particular events because of the complexity of unknown and uncontrollable external forces. When an individual expresses an internal locus of control he or she sees events as happening because of their own behavior or personal characteristics. They do not see events or results being influenced by external forces or the power of other individuals.

Table 5.4 presents responses indicating external and internal locus of control on the above question by harassed and nonharassed women. Both harassed and nonharassed women tended to respond the same way if they felt they would be harassed in the future. They expressed an external locus of control. They reported that they would be harassed because they had no control over the events involving sexual harassment. One woman who was harassed in the past felt that she would be again because, "Some men resent attractive, educated women threatening their environment." A nonharassed woman said, "I intend to be in the work force another thirty years. As prevalent as sexual harassment seems to be, I expect I will probably be harassed at some point in the future." Over 92 percent of the harassed women who felt that they would be harassed in the future expressed an external locus of control. Seventy-five percent of the nonharassed women who felt they would be harassed in the future expressed an external locus of control.

When respondents, both harassed and nonharassed,

TABLE 5.4

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND PERCEPTION OF FUTURE HARASSMENT^a
OF SELF AMONG SEXUALLY HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN^b

	Sexually Harassed Women				Nonharassed Women			
	No	Uncertain	Yes	Total	No	Uncertain	Yes	Total
	N=13 %	N=6 %	N=14 %	N=33 %	N=41 %	N=14 %	N=4 %	N=59 %
External locus of control	1 7.69	5 83.33	13 92.86	19 57.58	11 26.83	10 71.43	3 75.00	24 40.68
Internal locus of control	12 92.31	1 16.67	1 7.14	14 42.42	31 75.61	4 28.57	2 50.00	37 62.71

^a"Do you expect that you personally will be sexually harassed at work or in the classroom in the future? Explain why you answered Question 40 as you did."

^bTable contains multiple responses.

stated that they did not feel that they would be harassed in the future they expressed an internal locus of control more often than an external locus of control. These women felt that they were in control of what was happening to them and around them. One nonharassed woman said, "I feel I have some control over situations I am in." Another nonharassed woman reported, "My demeanor does not attract it. I come across fairly strong. Since sexual harassment is primarily a power play it is perhaps more successfully directed at persons who appear more vulnerable." One harassed woman stated, "I'm a more assertive person now and wouldn't allow the situation to develop." Over 92 percent of the harassed women who said they would not be harassed in the future expressed an internal locus of control. This compares to over 75 percent of the nonharassed women.

Women who reported they were uncertain if they would be harassed in the future more often expressed an external locus of control than an internal locus of control. As one woman remarked, "(You) can't see the future." Another said, "So far I've been lucky but who is to say what kind of people I'll run across in the future." Over 83 percent of the harassed women who reported that they were uncertain about future harassment expressed an external locus of control as compared with over 71 percent of the nonharassed women.

Overall, a greater number of harassed women expressed an external locus of control; nearly 58 percent as compared

to slightly more than 40 percent of the nonharassed women. It appears that nonharassed women feel they have more control over what happens to them regarding the possibility of being sexually harassed in the future. Over 62 percent of the nonharassed women expressed an internal locus of control. They express a self image of control and power. As one nonharassed woman remarked, "I feel I have the confidence and assertiveness to handle any suggestion of harassment."

In Chapter II it was noted that the percentage on nonharassed women who held a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., Ed.D., or other doctorate was more than three times as great for nonharassed women as harassed women. The status of having an advanced degree may ward off harassment; they women may not appear as vulnerable. These women may have developed an internal locus of control as they worked to achieve their professional status. The internal locus of control may assist these women in not appearing as vulnerable and therefore subject to harassment.

The opposite appears true for harassed women. Nearly 58 percent expressed an external locus of control. These women felt they either could not predict the future or they had little control over what would happen to them regarding sexual harassment.

Time and causal sequences are not known. The harassed woman may express a feeling of loss of control as a result of the experience of being harassed. On the other

hand, women expressing an external locus of control may appear more vulnerable and therefore more subject to harassment. It is the latter sequences that are emphasized in this research.

The concept of vulnerability has been discussed previously. The analysis of the data on locus of control provides further support to the belief that women who appear vulnerable are more likely to be sexually harassed than women who appear in control and in charge. Future research should investigate further the concept of locus of control as it relates to the possibility of sexual harassment.

Perception of Future Harassment of Other Women

The survey instrument contained one question on the perception of future harassment of women in general and asked, "Do you feel women in general will be sexually harassed at work or in the classroom in the future?" Table 5.5 presents the frequency of response to this question. Over 81 percent of the harassed women felt that women would be harassed in the future as compared to 63 percent of the nonharassed women. None of the harassed women answered 'No' to this question while 10 percent of the nonharassed women answered 'No'. Over 18 percent of the harassed women were uncertain as compared to over 26 percent of the nonharassed women.

The second part of the question asked respondents to

TABLE 5.5
 FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION FORTY-ONE^a
 BY SEXUALLY HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN

	Sexually Harassed Women		Nonharassed Women	
	N	%	N	%
No	0	0.00	7	10.29
Uncertain	7	18.42	18	26.47
Yes	31	81.58	43	63.24
Total	38	100.00	68	100.00

^a"Do you feel women in general will be sexually harassed at work or in the classroom in the future?"

explain their answers to the first part of the question. The responses were separated into harassed and nonharassed and then analyzed for locus of control. Table 5.6 presents the frequency of response to locus of control and perception of future harassment by harassed and nonharassed women.

Over 93 percent of the harassed women and nearly 80 percent of the nonharassed women who felt that women would be harassed in the future expressed an external locus of control. As one harassed woman reported, "Men use sexual harassment as a way of exercising power over women." Another stated, "Basic insecurity of men. As women advance their lives toward career goals and a nontraditional lifestyle; resentment and insecure feelings of men may show up through sexual intimidation and harassment on the job." These women report that harassment will continue because of external events and the power and control of other people, in this case men.

Only 10.29 percent of the nonharassed women felt that women in general would not be harassed in the future. One half of these women expressed an internal locus of control. One woman remarked, "Women should be more accepted as time goes by." Another woman said:

As more publicity is given the subject both men and women are becoming aware of the problem. I think in the past many men have not realized all the negative consequences of their actions. They thought they were flattering the woman involved. They are being made aware that it is not flattering if you don't want it.

TABLE 5.6

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND PERCEPTION OF FUTURE HARASSMENT^a
OF WOMEN IN GENERAL AMONG SEXUALLY HARASSED AND NONHARASSED WOMEN^b

	Sexually Harassed Women				Nonharassed Women			
	No N=0	Uncertain N=4	Yes N=30	Total N=34	No N=4	Uncertain N=15	Yes N=39	Total N=58
External locus of control	0 0.00	4 100.00	28 93.33	32 94.12	2 50.00	11 73.33	31 79.49	44 75.86
Internal locus of control	0 0.00	2 50.00	3 10.00	5 14.71	2 50.00	5 33.33	12 30.77	19 32.76

^a"Do you feel women in general will be sexually harassed at work or in the classroom in the future? Why? (Please elaborate.)"

^bTable contains multiple responses.

These women are expressing a feeling that women have control over what happens to them and can ward off sexual harassment in the future.

Respondents, both harassed and nonharassed, that stated they were uncertain expressed an external locus of control more often than an internal locus of control. Several women simply stated that they could not predict the future. One woman remarked that it was hard to tell because, "There are a lot of angry men and insecure women out there."

Overall, sexually harassed women expressed an external locus of control more often than nonharassed women when explaining their perceptions of future harassment of women in general; 94 percent as compared to nearly 76 percent. Harassed women see future harassment of women in general as being dependent on external forces and events that women are not able to control.

Blaming the Victim

When the responses were analyzed for locus of control, there was a surprising result. Over 14.7 percent of the nonharassed women reported that women are to blame for sexual harassment. The concept of 'blaming the victim' is studied in depth in William Ryan's book by the same name (1971). He discusses how society often tends to place blame on victims, particularly if the victim is poor, emotionally disturbed or a minority. By blaming the victim society can remove itself from responsibility and commitment

to solve the problem. A 'blaming the victim' mentality impedes the formation of social policy to solve social problems because the victim is viewed as being the cause of the problem and society is therefore not responsible.

None of the harassed women expressed the feeling that women were to blame for sexual harassment. The 'blaming the victim' attitude was only expressed by non-harassed women. One nonharassed woman remarked, "Some women may feel that this 'sexual' aspect is necessary for success in the working world. This attitude will make it difficult for others who are of different opinions." Another woman stated, "I do need to mention that some women who wear very revealing clothes may be asking for it without being aware that they are. Female employees should point out proper business dress to them." A similar remark from another nonharassed woman was, "In many cases I feel women bring sexual harassment on themselves by the way they dress or perhaps the manner they present themselves."

In Chapter IV when harassed women were asked what had motivated their harassers, none of the harassed women blamed themselves for the harassment. The harassed women did not feel that they had behaved in a manner which would cause them to be harassed: they did not dress seductively or act inappropriately to encourage harassment. 'Blaming the victim' remarks were only expressed by nonharassed women.

Summary

When job status of harasser and victim were compared, over 84 percent of the women reported harassment by a man with a higher job status who they felt was in a position of authority over them. Only 15.79 percent reported harassment by co-workers. One half of the cases of harassment took place at the university. Of these cases over 63 percent involved students, secretaries, and other C-line employees. Over 68 percent of the women who reported harassment in other work settings were students, secretaries, bookkeepers, and unskilled laborers.

It appears that sexual harassment is not based on erotic sexual dynamics. Instead, it appears to be based on power. In nearly 85 percent of the cases of harassment reported in this survey the harassed women were in lower status than their harassers. These women also reported that their harassers were in a position of authority over them.

When ages of harasser and victim were compared nearly 74 percent of the harassers were age 36 or older. In contrast, nearly 90 percent of the harassed women were age 35 or younger. It appears that harassers are more often men, age 36 or older, who harass younger women, under the age of 35. When ages were compared on a case-by-case basis, in over 81 percent of the cases the harasser was older than his victim.

When women were asked if they felt that they would

be harassed in the future over 36 percent of the harassed women answered 'Yes' as compared to only 5.88 percent of the nonharassed women. Over 72 percent of the nonharassed women stated that they felt they would not be harassed in the future.

Respondents' explanations for their perceptions of future harassment were analyzed for locus of control. When both harassed women and nonharassed women answered 'Yes' to the possibility of future harassment they expressed an external locus of control more often than an internal locus of control; over 92 percent of the harassed women and 75 percent of the nonharassed women. When both harassed and nonharassed women answered 'No' they tended to express an internal locus of control; 92 percent for harassed women and 75 percent for nonharassed women. Overall, a greater number of harassed women expressed an external locus of control when they explained their perceptions of possible future harassment.

When respondents were asked if women in general would be harassed in the future over 81 percent of the harassed women answered 'Yes' as compared to 63 percent of the nonharassed women. Only 10 percent of the nonharassed women answered 'No' while none of the harassed women answered 'No'.

Over 93 percent of the harassed women and nearly 80 percent of the nonharassed women who answered 'Yes' to the possibility of future harassment of women in general

expressed an external locus of control. Harassed women held an external locus of control more often than non-harassed women when explaining possible future harassment of women in general; 94 percent as compared to 76 percent.

Over 14.7 percent of the nonharassed women reported that women themselves were responsible for sexual harassment. None of the harassed women expressed this 'blaming the victim' point of view.

A typical case of sexual harassment would involve a man over the age of 36 who has a higher job status than the woman he harasses. The victim is either divorced or has never been married, younger than her harasser (under age 25), in a lower status job than her harasser, and expresses an external locus of control about the possibility of future harassment, both her own and women in general.

Future research should explore the power and status relations between the harasser and the victim from both their points of view. The age differences should also be explored in future research to see if these differences were unique to this study. Further research on locus of control, self-perception, and sexual harassment may give a better understanding as to why some women are harassed and other women are not. It is possible that an internal locus of control may assist women in warding off sexual harassment.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The two foci of this research on sexual harassment, to gather data on the process of sexual harassment and to compare harassed and nonharassed women's attitudes and perceptions about harassment, have been completed. The survey instrument was distributed to 409 women who were students or employees at an urban university of 15,000 in a medium-sized Midwestern city. The response rate was 23.24 percent; 35 percent of these respondents reported being sexually harassed.

Chapter I states the problem and presents a review of the literature and some theoretical perspectives applicable to this issue. In Chapter II current sociodemographic characteristics of harassed and nonharassed women were compared. The major differences were age and marital status; harassed women were younger and more often divorced or never married than nonharassed women. Other differences in level of education, especially at the doctorate level were noted; over three times as many nonharassed women had a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., Ed.D., or other doctorate as harassed women. Also, over 47 percent of the harassed women reported having been employed at their current job position

for only two years or less as compared to 25 percent of the nonharassed women.

When sociodemographic characteristics of harassed women at the time of harassment were compared with those of the total group of respondents, age and marital status differences were again most noticeable. Harassed women were younger at the time of harassment than all respondents currently. More harassed women were either never married or divorced at the time of harassment than the total group of respondents currently.

Chapter III compared harassed and nonharassed women's awareness of and definition of sexual harassment of working women. Over 75 percent of all respondents were aware of sexual harassment prior to receiving this survey instrument. Over half of all respondents felt that sexual harassment was a problem for working women today.

When harassed and nonharassed women were asked to define sexual harassment in their own words both groups tended to define harassment as coercive, verbal and physical, and as having negative effects on working women. Harassed women more often than nonharassed women stated that harassment was coercive.

When asked to choose from a list of behaviors they felt to be harassment, the majority of both harassed and nonharassed women tended to feel that except for ogling and leering all the behaviors listed were sexual harassment. Even the subtle behaviors of ogling and leering were viewed

by many respondents as forms of harassment; over 55 percent felt ogling was harassment and over 68 percent felt that leering was harassment.

When subjective and behavioral definitions of harassment were compared there was strong agreement among respondents, both harassed and nonharassed. Sexual harassment was most often defined as unwanted physical contact or verbal comments which involve some type of coercion or threat.

Chapter IV discussed the process of sexual harassment from the harassed women's point of view. More harassed women reported verbal harassment than physical or a combination of verbal and physical. Over 21 percent reported that verbal harassment was often repeated and escalated to physical harassment or threats if the harasser's requests were not complied with. Physical harassment was more often reported as happening only one time.

When harassed women were asked what motivated their harassers, over 50 percent attributed the motivation for the harassment to some aspect of their harasser and not to themselves. More specifically, these respondents attributed the motivation for the harassment to the general social/cultural view men have of women or to psychological characteristics exhibited by the harasser. Over one third felt that the motivation for harassment was the need for some men to maintain their power because such men felt threatened by women in the workplace. Nearly one third of

the respondents felt that the motivation for harassment was because of a quality they held such as vulnerability or attractiveness. They did not feel they were to blame for the harassment or had brought about the harassment themselves. They stated that their harassers were motivated to harass them because they were either young, single, or physically attractive.

Harassed women described their feelings about being sexually harassed as angry, embarrassed, powerless, demeaned, frightened, and shocked. Most often, in over 50 percent of the cases, the women expressed anger.

Respondents handled their harassment in two general ways: actively or passively. Active responses involved confronting the harasser or reporting him. Passive responses involved ignoring or avoiding the harasser, submitting to the harassment, or quitting one's job. The greatest number of harassed women, nearly 79 percent, handled their harassment in a passive way.

When data on consequences was analyzed it was found that handling harassment in a passive manner often exacerbated the situation. Of the women who reported that their harassment continued and/or worsened, all had handled their harassment in a passive manner.

In Chapter V harassment was discussed by comparing characteristics of the harasser and the victim. Over 84 percent of the harassers held a higher status job and the victims reported that the harasser was in a position to

exert his authority over them. A large percentage of the women harassed, both at the university and in other work settings, held lower status jobs than the men who harassed them; few women were harassed by co-workers or men with lower status jobs.

When ages of harasser and victim were compared it was found that harassers were often men aged 36 or older who harass women aged 35 or younger. When ages were compared on a case-by-case basis in over 81 percent of the cases the harasser was older than his victim. This data on age and job status of harasser and victim lend support to the theory that the dynamics of power are involved and not the dynamics of erotic sexual attraction. Conflict theory provides a useful perspective on this problem and is compatible with the research results.

When respondents were asked if they and women in general would be harassed in the future a greater percentage of harassed women answered 'Yes' to both questions than did nonharassed women. Respondents' explanations to these two questions were analyzed for locus of control. When respondents answered 'No' to the possibility of future harassment they tended to have expressed an internal locus of control. Overall, harassed women tended to express an external locus of control more often than nonharassed women when they explained their perceptions of possible future harassment, both their own and women in general.

One interesting result of the analysis of locus of

control was that over 14 percent (N=10) of the nonharassed women tended to directly 'blame the victim' for sexual harassment. None of the harassed women expressed a similar attitude.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this research which should be noted. The first limitation involves the population selected for the research. The survey was sent to women graduate students and employees at an urban university of 15,000 located in a medium-sized Midwestern city. Although this sample offered built-in social, economic, and occupational stratification, the findings cannot necessarily be applied to other work settings. This research does not compare sexual harassment in different work settings to discover how harassment may vary from workplace to workplace.

The second limitation has to do with the survey instrument. The length of the questionnaire and the type of questions used, open-ended, may have limited the response rate. The low response rate (23%) does mean that the data presented may not be representative of the population.

Future Research

As stated in Chapter I, this research was hypothesis generating in character, and not hypothesis testing. Findings from the data generated suggest a number of areas for

future research on sexual harassment of working women. Future research on sexual harassment should include who is vulnerable to harassment. From this research it seems that women who appear more vulnerable--young, single, new to their current job, and holding a low status job--are more likely to be harassed. Future research should also include further investigation of the relationship of locus of control to the possibility of harassment. Appearing vulnerable and expressing an external locus of control may make women a more probable target for harassment, whereas appearing in control and in charge and expressing an internal locus of control may ward off harassment.

Another important area for future research involves power and status relations between the victim and the harasser. This research appears to confirm previous research that states harassment is based on power and not erotic sexual attraction. Perhaps a closer comparison of the sexual harassment to the power politics of rape will add to a better understanding of why sexual harassment occurs.

A third area of future research should include the male perspective. The male definition of and awareness of harassment may differ greatly from the female. It may be possible that men do not view some behaviors as harassment but instead as general 'sexual play' between men and women. These men may also feel that men are motivated to harass women for different reasons than those expressed by the

women in this research.

Lastly, further research should be undertaken on type of harassment and where it occurs. It appears that verbal harassment is more prominent than physical or a combination of both. It also appears that verbal harassment often escalates to physical harassment or threats while physical harassment is, in many cases, a one time occurrence. Different work settings should also be compared along with sexual composition of the workplace to discover how the overall process of harassment varies.

Social Policy Implications

Eliminating sexual harassment from the workplace and the classroom will not happen overnight. Hopefully this research has pointed to a number of issues and research areas that deserve further investigation. Understanding both the male and female perspective on what sexual harassment is and why it happens is a vital element in reducing incidents. If men and women do not define harassment and why it happens in the same way there is no common ground from which to solve the problem. Although all parties involved may not ever agree completely, there needs to be a greater consensus of opinion about a standard definition of sexual harassment and its causes.

If the cause of harassment is the harasser's desire to maintain his power and future research tends to bear this out, then there needs to be increased public awareness of this point. The desire to maintain one's power in the

workplace is not necessarily a negative or misplaced feeling; however, the manner one uses to maintain it may be suspect. Men and women need to learn more positive ways of working together and maintaining their individual power in our highly competitive work force. Educating employers and employees about the negative effects of harassment must go hand-in-hand with training people on how to avoid harassment and communicate constructively. The results of this research may have implications of training programs in business and industry.

Data generated from this research on locus of control and vulnerability may assist women in learning how to handle sexual harassment. One nonharassed woman commented, "What harassed women need is a course in assertiveness." This may well be a blunt comment but it is not without merit. Assertiveness does assist its students to be in control, to say 'No', and to actively respond to situations and not be a passive victim. This is not to say that women bring about their own harassment. What this researcher is saying is that removing the appearance of vulnerability and establishing the appearance of being in control may assist in warding off harassment.

Workplaces should confront the issue of harassment from both male and female perspectives. Men should be educated as to what harassment is, why it happens, and how to deal with feelings that may lead to harassment in a more acceptable and constructive manner. Women also need to be

educated about sexual harassment and how to avoid it. Lastly, both men and women need to realize that blaming the victims of harassment for their situation will not solve the problem but may exacerbate it. If harassment is viewed as the harassed woman's fault little effort will be made to view and define harassment as a social problem in need of collective social action.

In conclusion, this research has hopefully added to the understanding of sexual harassment of working women. It has, in some areas, reaffirmed what other researchers have found, in particular with respect to power and status relations, definition of harassment, types of harassment, how women feel about harassment, how they handle it, and the consequences. New areas for future research were also generated, in particular the concept of vulnerability, locus of control, and motivation for harassment.

It is hoped that the subject of sexual harassment of working women will continue to be viewed as a social problem worthy of sociological investigation and that this research has added to the understanding of harassment and its implications for working women.

APPENDIX 1

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. Have you heard of "sexual harassment" prior to this questionnaire?
 - 1 ☐ No
 - 2 ☐ Yes, but only a few times
 - 3 ☐ Yes, and I am very aware of it
 - 4 ☐ Uncertain
2. If you answered YES to Question 1, where did you hear about it? (Check as many categories as apply.)

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Friend	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Book or magazine
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Relative	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Academic environment
3 <input type="checkbox"/> TV	8 <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experience
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper	9 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____
5 <input type="checkbox"/> Radio	
3. How would you define sexual harassment?
4. Which of the following behaviors would you consider to be sexual harassment? (Check as many categories as apply.)

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ogling	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual jokes aimed at you
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Leering	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Attempted rape
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Suggestive sexual remarks	8 <input type="checkbox"/> Demands for sex in return for special favors
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Unwanted physical contact	
5 <input type="checkbox"/> Unsolicited invitations to have sex	
5. Would you agree that sexual harassment (if we define sexual harassment as "ANY REPEATED AND UNWANTED SEXUAL COMMENTS, LOOKS, SUGGESTIONS OR PHYSICAL CONTACT THAT YOU FIND OBJECTIONABLE OR OFFENSIVE AND CAUSES YOU DISCOMFORT ON THE JOB OR IN THE CLASSROOM") is a problem for working women today?

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	4 <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Agree	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

6. Are you aware of other women (not including yourself) being sexually harassed at work or in the classroom?
- 1 ☐ No
2 ☐ Yes, but only in a few isolated instances
3 ☐ Yes, and it is a common occurrence
4 ☐ Uncertain
7. If you answered YES to Question 6, were these women any of the following?
- 1 ☐ Friend
2 ☐ Relative
3 ☐ Casual acquaintance
4 ☐ Coworker
5 ☐ Other (Please specify) _____
8. Do you feel the sexual harassment experienced by these women has been a serious problem for any of these women?
- 1 ☐ No
2 ☐ Yes
3 ☐ Uncertain
9. Have you ever been sexually harassed at work or in the classroom?
- 1 ☐ No
2 ☐ Yes

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO QUESTION 9 PLEASE CONTINUE AND COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE. IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO QUESTION 9 PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 7 AND COMPLETE QUESTIONS 40 THROUGH 44. THEN RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE WITH MY THANKS.

- NOTE: THE FOLLOWING ANSWERS SHOULD BE BASED ON WHAT YOU FEEL WAS YOUR MOST SERIOUS INCIDENT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE OR THE CLASSROOM. BY THIS WE MEAN THE INCIDENT THAT CAUSED YOU THE MOST DIFFICULTY FROM YOUR POINT OF VIEW. (This could include incidents of sexual harassment which took place at work or school related social situations and not necessarily at work or in the classroom.)
10. Describe the nature of the sexual harassment, including whether it was physical and/or verbal and where it took place.
11. What do you feel motivated your sexual harasser to harass you?

12. Describe your personal feelings about the sexual harassment.
13. Do you feel your sexual harassment was a personal problem for you?
- 1 ☐ No
 - 2 ☐ Yes, but not a significant problem
 - 3 ☐ Yes, and it was a serious problem
 - 4 ☐ Uncertain
14. If it was a problem for you, describe in what way.
15. How did you handle the sexual harassment?

Did you do any of the following? (Check as many as apply.)

- 1 ☐ Confide in a friend
 - 2 ☐ Confide in a family member
 - 3 ☐ Confide in a coworker
 - 4 ☐ Submit to the demands of the harasser
 - 5 ☐ Ignore the harassment
 - 6 ☐ Angrily demand the harassment stop
 - 7 ☐ Distract the harasser by changing the subject
 - 8 ☐ Cry in front of the harasser
 - 9 ☐ Flirt with the harasser to put him off
 - 10 ☐ Go to the harasser's superior with a complaint
 - 11 ☐ Make up a story to put the harasser off
 - 12 ☐ Return the harassment
 - 13 ☐ Went along with the demands because I received some benefits
 - 14 ☐ File a complaint through the proper channels at work or at school
 - 15 ☐ Ask for a transfer
 - 16 ☐ Find the harassment a personal compliment
 - 17 ☐ Encouraged the harasser because I received some benefits
 - 18 ☐ Contacted an outside agency and/or person for professional help
 - 19 ☐ Quit your job
 - 20 ☐ Other (Please specify) _____
-

16. Why did you handle the sexual harassment in this manner?
(Please comment separately on each item you checked in Question 15.)
17. What were the consequences of handling the sexual harassment in the manner that you chose?

Did any of the following happen to you? (Check as many as apply.)

- 1 ☐ Forced to transfer to another department
 - 2 ☐ Forced to quit your job
 - 3 ☐ Have the harassment end to your satisfaction
 - 4 ☐ Have the harasser transferred to another department
 - 5 ☐ Have the harasser fired
 - 6 ☐ Have the harassment continue
 - 7 ☐ Have the harassment continue and also worsen
 - 8 ☐ Have the harasser place negative performance evaluations in your file
 - 9 ☐ Have the harasser lower a grade in a course or on a paper
 - 10 ☐ Have your harasser ridicule you in front of coworkers and/or peers
 - 11 ☐ Other (Please specify) _____
18. Was there a final satisfactory solution to the sexual harassment?
- 1 ☐ No
 - 2 ☐ Yes
 - 3 ☐ Uncertain
19. If you answered YES to Question 18, what was the final solution?
20. If the resolution was unsatisfactory, did you pursue any other alternative(s)?
- 1 ☐ No
 - 2 ☐ Yes
- Please explain what you did.
21. Would you handle the sexual harassment incident in the same manner today?
- 1 ☐ No
 - 2 ☐ Yes
 - 3 ☐ Uncertain

22. If you answered NO to Question 21, explain how you would handle the sexual harassment today and why.
23. How long ago did the sexual harassment take place?
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Under three months | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> One to three years |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Three to six months | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Three to five years |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Six months to one year | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Over five years |
24. What was your position at the time of the sexual harassment? (if employed at the University)
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Other C-Line Employee |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> A-Line Administrator | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Teaching Assistant |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> B-Line | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> C-Line Secretary | |
25. If the sexual harassment did not occur within the University system, please describe in general terms the position you held and the type of business in which you were employed. (Do not name the business or the employer by specific name.)
26. How long had you held your position when the sexual harassment first occurred?
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Under three months | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> One to three years |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Three to six months | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Three to five years |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Six months to one year | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Over five years |
27. What was the position of the person who sexually harassed you? (if employed at the University)
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Other C-Line Employee |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> A-Line Administrator | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Teaching Assistant |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> B-Line | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> C-Line Secretary | |
28. If the harassment did not occur within the University system, describe in general terms the position of the person who harassed you. Include whether the harasser was a coworker or a supervisor. (Do not name the business or the employer by specific name.)

29. How many males and females were employed in your work area at the time of your sexual harassment? (This does not mean these individuals had to have witnessed the harassment, but only that they were employed there at the time.)

1___ Number of males 2___ Number of females

30. What was the number of supervisory males and supervisory females employed in your work area at the time of your sexual harassment? (Again, these individuals need not have witnessed your harassment.)

1___ Number of supervisory males
2___ Number of supervisory females

31. What was the number of nonsupervisory males and nonsupervisory females in your work area at the time of your harassment? (Again, they need not have witnessed the harassment.)

1___ Number of nonsupervisory males
2___ Number of nonsupervisory females

32. Was the sexual harassment viewed by anyone else at the time it took place?

1___ No
2___ Yes
3___ Uncertain

If YES, by whom? (Check as many categories as apply.)

1___ Male coworker	6___ Your harasser's female supervisor
2___ Female coworker	
3___ Male customer or client	7___ Your male supervisor
4___ Female customer or client	8___ Your female supervisor
5___ Your harasser's male supervisor	9___ Other (Please specify)

33. What was your age at the time of the sexual harassment?

1___ Under 25	3___ 36 to 50
2___ 25 to 35	4___ Over 50

34. What was the age of your harasser at the time of the sexual harassment?

1___ Under 25	3___ 36 to 50
2___ 25 to 35	4___ Over 50

35. What was your martial status at the time of your sexual harassmt?
- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Never Married | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Separated |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Married | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried, living together | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed |
36. What was your yearly income at the time of the sexual harassmt?
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$5,000 | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000 to \$20,000 |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 to \$10,000 | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Over \$20,000 |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$15,000 | |
37. Did you have any dependents for which you were at least 50% of the source of financial support at the time of the sexual harassmt (other than yourself)?
- 1 ☐ No
2 ☐ Yes
- If YES, how many?
- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> One | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Three |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Two | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Four or More |
38. Have you ever been sexually harassed by other individuals while employed in the same work setting in which your most serious incident of harassmt occurred?
- 1 ☐ No
2 ☐ Yes
- If YES, how many times?
- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Once | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Three |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Twice | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Four or More |
39. Have you ever been sexually harassed by an individual(s) while employed in a work setting other than the one in which your most serious incident of sexual harassmt occurred?
- 1 ☐ No
2 ☐ Yes
40. Do you expect that you personally will be sexually harassed at work or in a classroom in the future?
- 1 ☐ No
2 ☐ Yes
3 ☐ Uncertain

Please explain why you answered Question 40 as you did.

41. Do you feel women in general will be sexually harassed at work or in a classroom in the future?

1 ☐ No
 2 ☐ Yes
 3 ☐ Uncertain

Why? (Please elaborate.)

42. Now that you have completed the major portion of this questionnaire, is there anything you would like to say?

43. Please fill out the following current information.

AGE

1 ☐ Under 25
 2 ☐ 25 - 35
 3 ☐ 36 - 50
 4 ☐ Over 50

RACE

1 ☐ Black
 2 ☐ Hispanic
 3 ☐ Asian
 4 ☐ Native American Indian
 5 ☐ White
 6 ☐ Other

MARTIAL STATUS

1 ☐ Never married
 2 ☐ Married
 3 ☐ Unmarried, living together
 4 ☐ Separated
 5 ☐ Divorced
 6 ☐ Widowed

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

1 ☐ Catholic
 2 ☐ Protestant
 3 ☐ Orthodox
 4 ☐ Jewish
 5 ☐ Other

YEARS OF EDUCATION (Chose the category which best represents you.)

1 ☐ Grade School
 2 ☐ Some High School
 3 ☐ High School Graduate
 4 ☐ Business or Technical School
 5 ☐ Some College
 6 ☐ College Graduate
 7 ☐ Some Graduate School
 8 ☐ Master's degree
 9 ☐ Ph.D., M.D., J.D., Ed.D. or Other Doctorate

NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS (Include all dependents for which you are at least 50% of the source of support other than yourself.)

1 ☐ One
 2 ☐ Two
 3 ☐ Three
 4 ☐ Four or More

YEARLY PERSONAL INCOME

- 1 ☐ Under \$5,000 4 ☐ \$15,000 to \$20,000
 2 ☐ \$5,000 to \$10,000 5 ☐ Over \$20,000
 3 ☐ \$10,000 to \$15,000

SPOUSE'S YEARLY INCOME (if appropriate)

- 1 ☐ Under \$5,000 4 ☐ \$15,000 to \$20,000
 2 ☐ \$5,000 to \$10,000 5 ☐ Over \$20,000
 3 ☐ \$10,000 to \$15,000

YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

- 1 ☐ Two or Less 3 ☐ Five to Ten Years
 2 ☐ Three to Five Years 4 ☐ Over Ten Years

YEARS EMPLOYED AT YOUR PRESENT POSITION

- 1 ☐ Two or Less 3 ☐ Five to Ten Years
 2 ☐ Three to Five Years 4 ☐ Over Ten Years

44. Check the appropriate category. (Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, and SD = Strongly Disagree.)

	SA	A	D	SD
a. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.				
b. A man can make long-range plans for his life, but a woman has to take things as they come.				
c. It is more important for a wife to help her husband('s career) than to have a career herself.				
d. Parents should encourage just as much independence in their daughters as in their sons.				
e. It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.				
f. Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning, and so forth.				

	SA	A	D	SD
g. A preschool child is likely to suffer if his mother works.				
h. A woman's job should be kept for her when she is having a baby.				
i. Men and women should be paid the same money if they do the same job.				
j. A woman should have exactly the same job opportunities as a man.				
k. Women should be considered as seriously as men for jobs as executives or politicians or even President.				
l. Women who do not want at least one child are being selfish.				
m. A woman can live a full and happy life without marrying.				

THE COVER LETTER

Dear Colleague:

You are invited to participate in a study of sexual harassment of working women. It is part of the research I am conducting for a Master's degree in Sociology at the University. I am interested in studying women employed in various institutional settings and you are one of the approximately 500 working women asked to assist in this research.

Although sexual harassment has been a topic of discussion for some time, it has been a little-researched topic. Some people think it is a serious social problem for women, while other people feel its seriousness is being overstated. Hopefully, my research will lead to a better understanding of the problem of sexual harassment. I am interested in finding out who is harassed and why; the type of harassment which is most prominent; and how the situation is handled by women who are harassed. I hope you will agree that such a study is important and will complete the attached questionnaire. It is important to complete the questionnaire even if you personally have never been sexually harassed. I am interested in hearing from women who have been harassed as well as women who have never been sexually harassed.

If you decide to participate in this survey, please fill out the anonymous questionnaire as completely as possible. I realize a number of questions require lengthy responses on your part, but I sincerely hope you will be patient and answer each question honestly and thoroughly. You are in no way obligated to complete the questionnaire. You are free to decline participation completely or to decline to answer any particular question you choose.

If you decide to participate your answers will be held in the strictest confidence and no personal information about you will be published or made known to other people. When I review your responses I will be interested in searching for group patterns of behavior and will not focus on individual cases. In fact, all responses will be anonymous. I will not be able to identify any particular individual nor will I be able to associate a particular response with you personally.

At no time will anyone other than myself have access to personal information about any woman who responds to this questionnaire. I want to clarify that the University is not sponsoring this data collection and will not have access to any of the data.

If you choose to participate, please complete the questionnaire and return it through the Interdepartment Campus Mail in the attached envelope no later than Friday, June 18, 1982. As a student I cannot utilize Interdepartmental Campus Mail. Therefore, the return envelope is addressed to Dr. _____, my thesis advisor. She will collect the envelopes but will not have access to the completed questionnaires. Only I will have access to your questionnaires. Your return of the questionnaire will be documentation of your informed consent to participate in this research. If you have any questions, you can reach me at 345-1116. My thesis advisor is Dr. _____, Department of Sociology.

I have chosen the topic of sexual harassment of working women because I want to research a subject in which I have great interest. I hope you will agree this study has merit and is worthy of your participation. I thank you in advance for your support.

APPENDIX 2

TABLE 1

TYPES OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE, SEXUAL STRATIFICATION AND
DOMINANT IOEOLOGIES

Social Structure	Male & Female Resources	Sexual Roles	Dominant Ideologies
Low-technology tribal societies.	Male: personal force, personal attractiveness. Female: personal attractiveness.	Limited male sexual property; limited female exploitation.	Incest Taboos.
Fortified households in stratified society.	Male: organized force, control of property. Female: upperclass women head lineage during interregnum of male line.	Strongly enforced male sexual property; high female exploitation; women as exchange property in family alliances.	Male honor in controlling female chastity.
Private households in market economy, protected by centralized state.	Male: control of income and property. Female: personal attractiveness; domestic services; emotional support.	Sexual market of individual bargaining; bi-lateral sexual property in marriage.	Romantic love ideal in courtship; ideolized marriage bond.
Advanced market economy.	Male: income and property; personal attractiveness; emotional support. Female: income & property; personal attractiveness; emotional support.	Multi-dimensional sexual market of individual bargaining.	Multiple ideologies.

TABLE 2
HANDLING SEXUAL HARASSMENT
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE BY HARASSED WOMEN^a
TO TWENTY METHODS OF HANDLING HARASSMENT^a

	N=38	%
Confide in a friend	19	50.00
Confide in a family member	9	23.68
Confide in a coworker	18	47.37
Submit to the Demands of the Harasser	3	7.89
Ignore the harassment	16	40.11
Angrily demand the harassment stop	10	26.32
Distract the harasser by changing the subject	9	23.68
Cry in front of the harasser	2	5.26
Flirt with the harasser to put him off	0	0.00
Go to the harasser's superior with a complaint	3	7.89
Make up a story to put the harasser off	0	0.00
Return the harassment	1	2.63
Went along with the demands because I received some benefits	2	5.26
File a complaint through the proper channels at work or at school	1	2.63
Ask for a transfer	0	0.00
Find the harassment a personal compliment	1	2.63
Encouraged the harasser because I received some benefits	0	0.00
Contacted an outside agency and/or person for professional help	1	2.63
Quit your job	3	7.89
Other (Please specify)	1	2.63

^aRepresents multiple responses.

TABLE 3
CONSEQUENCES
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE^a BY HARASSED WOMEN
TO QUESTION SEVENTEEN ON CONSEQUENCES^b

	N=30	%
Forced to transfer to another department	0	0.00
Forced to quit your job	3	10.00
Have the harassment end to your satisfaction	15	50.00
Have the harasser transferred to another department	0	0.00
Have the harasser fired	1	3.33
Have the harassment continue	8	26.67
Have the harassment continue and worsen	1	3.33
Have the harasser place a negative performance evaluation in your file	0	0.00
Have the harasser lower a grade in a course or on a paper	0	0.00
Have the harasser ridicule you in front of coworkers and/or peers	3	10.00
Other (Please specify)	2	6.67

^aRepresents multiple responses.

^b"Did any of the following happen to you? (Check as many as apply.)"

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